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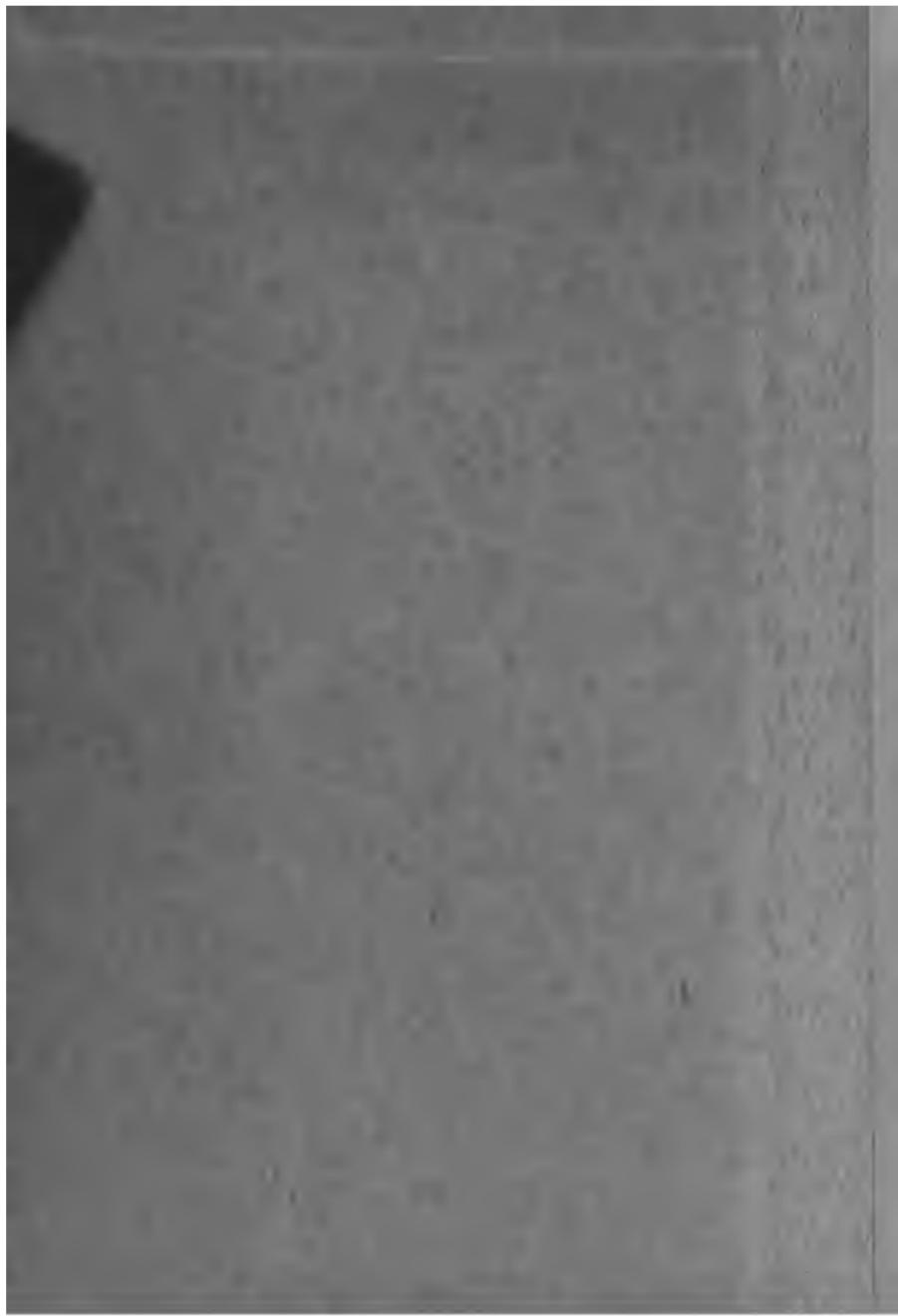
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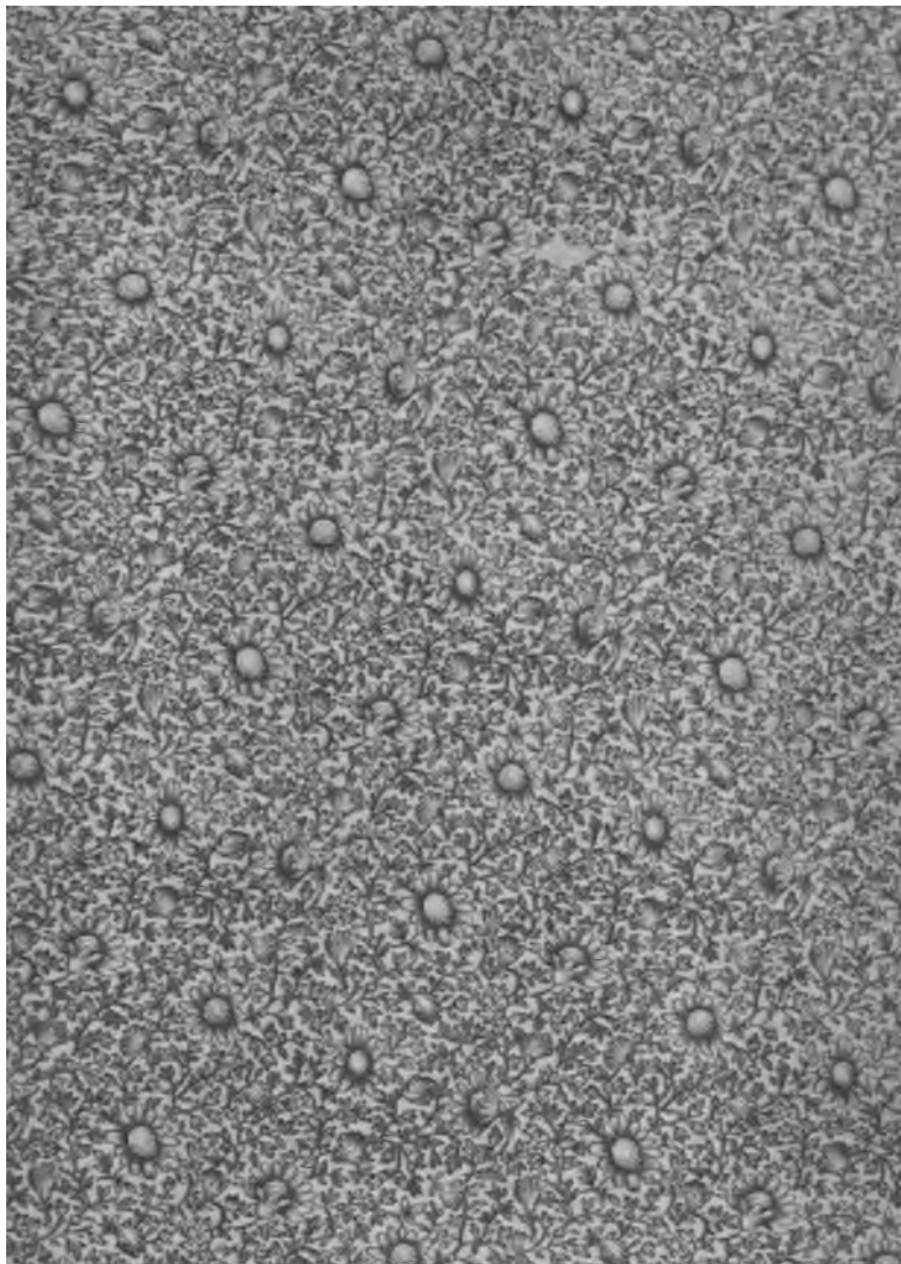


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A
**CONTINENTAL
CAVALIER**
2

*The Record of Some Incidents Pertaining to the Chevalier
de Marc, Brevet Major in the Army of the Colonies,
Aid-de-Camp to General, The Marquis Lafayette.*

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NEW YORK.

BY

Frank KIMBALL SCRIBNER

Author of "The Fifth of November," "The Honor of
a Princess," "The Love of the Princess Alice," etc.

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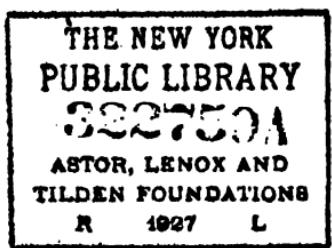
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FIFTH AVENUE

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AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED
TO
MY MOTHER.

BOOKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE HONOR OF A PRINCESS. Being a History of the Adventures of Harold Martant, Gentleman of England. Twenty-second thousand.

THE LOVE OF THE PRINCESS ALICE. A Romance of the Thirty Years' War. Fifteenth thousand.

IN THE LAND OF THE LOON. A Romance of the Wilderness.

THE FIFTH OF NOVEMBER. A Romance of the Stuarts.

IN BELEAGUERED PARIS. A Story of the Franco-Prussian War.

*The men in Buff and Blue ! Heroes of Lexington,
Bunker Hill, Monmouth and Saratoga. Dim through
the mist of passing years they arise before us, the
generation of another century. The faded coats, with
their dingy facings, hang in glass cases or lie forgotten
in the chest where our great-grandmothers so carefully
placed them. The old flint-locks which spoke so
eloquently on the shore of Brandywine, at Princeton,
Trenton and Bennington; curiosities now, resting in
the museum or hidden in a junk-shop. The rude blades
of the troopers—the swords of Marion's men and
"Light Horse Harry's" dragoons ! Wielded by
hands which have long been dust—drawn so sturdily
when the sun of liberty wavered between setting and
ascendency; flashing in the warm light of southern
skies; clanging in the shock of conflict—in the day
when Tarleton's red-coated legions swept the Carolinas.*

*Warriors of the Wilderness ! the men of King's
Mountain, Guilford and the Cowpens; their deeds
are long since history—dim through the passing of a
century.*

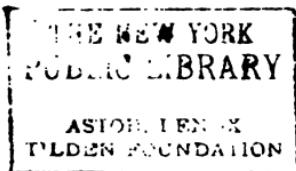
BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Mr. Kimball Scribner, the author of this book, was born in New York City, February 22d, 1867. He received his education at Williams College, graduating in the class of '90, and during the two succeeding years continued his studies at the Harvard Law School, intending to follow the profession of law. But the love of letters decided him to turn his attention to a literary rather than a legal life. To this end he accepted a position on the staff of the New York Sun, where he remained until the fall of 1896. During that time he acquired much valuable experience for his chosen work. While on the Sun he wrote for that paper a series of Adirondack hunting and fishing stories, which have since been published in book form. After severing his connection with the Sun, Mr. Scribner spent some time in travel and entered the literary field as a free lance. Many of his stories have appeared in various magazines and periodicals, his fondness for athletic and out-door sports, particularly those of forest and stream, being revealed in much of his work. In 1897 his first book, "The Honor of a Princess," was published; it has up to the present reached its twenty-third thousand. This was later followed by a sequel: "The Love of the Princess Alice" (fifteenth thousand). Mr. Scribner has also written, in collaboration with Dr. Charles S. Bentley, "The Fifth of November," a story which has been well received by lovers of English historical romance. In this his most recent book, "A Continental Cavalier," he has entered upon his favorite field—the period of the American Revolution.

THE PUBLISHERS.



KIMBALL SCRIBNER



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A CONTINENTAL CAVALIER.

PROLOGUE.

FROM VERSAILLES TO THE COLONIES.

A SUMMONS to attend the Count de le Mans in the King's cabinet! It was received with impatience, for I had but just returned from a mission assigned me by the Minister, and the afternoon's ride was long and hard. The Count being at the time one of his Majesty's favorites, it caused but momentary surprise that I, an attaché to the nobleman, should be commanded to meet him in the royal apartment. I soon presented myself at the door; the Count's voice bade me enter, when, to my embarrassment, I perceived King Louis himself standing at the open window.

As I bowed low on the threshold he raised his eyes, and the Count, who was pacing restlessly to and fro, stopped suddenly, exclaiming with relief: "Ah, Henri! I feared you would not return before nightfall."

The presence of the King checked any reply, which perceiving, Le Mans turned to him and said:

"Sire, this is the young man with whom I have ventured to acquaint you, Henri de Marc, whose father was known to your Majesty."

"And his son's friend," replied the King, holding out his hand that I might salute him. "If the boy be as the sire, methinks you have found an able messenger."

The Count smiled as I acknowledged this tribute to my father's memory, and said:

"I have known De Marc since a mere lad, and there are few youths in your Majesty's kingdom who can equal him in courage and prudence; Edouard and he have ever been as brothers."

"You are fortunate to stand so highly in the Count's favor," said the King addressing me, "and it is our pleasure that you do his bidding; therefore, Count, speak with him freely."

As though wearied with so long an utterance, Louis turned again to the window leaving us to continue our conversation.

"It is of Edouard you would speak," I ventured, noticing that the Count was strongly agitated. "Surely no evil—"

"My son is well," interrupted Le Mans, clasping his delicate white hands together, "yet I am greatly troubled; he has departed for America."

"America?" cried I.

"Even so," replied he shortly, "the day before yesterday."

"But I saw the Vicomte in Paris scarce a fortnight since," I exclaimed; "he said nothing—"

The Count frowned. "Neither to the King, nor to me, his father. It is the fever which has carried so many of his associates to the Colonies. Lafayette—" He struck his hand impatiently upon the table. "That my son's heart turned toward the Colonies I well knew," said he bitterly, "but that he should have left France secretly, I cannot yet bring myself to realize."

I understood the cause of the Vicomte's hasty action. That the Count de le Mans had little sympathy with the revolutionists was well known throughout the Court. That he had turned a deaf ear to the importunities of his son to be permitted to offer his services to General Washington was known as well. The Count was old ; for two centuries his house had served a king, and to his mind the Americans were rebels, even though they contended against the hated English. Above all, Edouard was the last of his house ; the one strong limb on the tottering trunk of an ancient race ; were he to fall, France must lose a name long associated with her proudest deeds.

The Count nervously drew from his waistcoat a paper, and handed it to me. "Here," said he, "is a letter received this day from Paris ; it is from the Vicomte, written on the eve of his departure."

I eagerly scanned the proffered sheet ; it told only that the writer was about to sail for America in company with six companions. The last line begged forgiveness, for, wrote he : "I shall uphold the name I bear with honor, and return with Lafayette to receive the approbation of the King, our sovereign."

As I raised my eyes I saw that the King was standing beside Le Mans. Louis was tender-hearted, and the grief of the old nobleman touched him. He laid his hand half caressingly on the Count's arm.

"Come ! " said he gently, "all is not lost ; I doubt me not thy son will return to thee. And if not——"

Le Mans fixed his eyes inquiringly upon the King's face.

"Thou art a Frenchman, and the French are brave," concluded Louis, "hast thou forgotten?"

The Count calmed himself by an effort. "Sire!" cried he, "I am indeed a Frenchman, yet my son is very dear; he is the last and only one." Then, turning to me:

"Edouard loves you, Henri; perhaps he was too hasty. Find him, and say that the King commands his return. You surely can influence him."

"Then?" said I.

"You must follow him. You are young, brave, and speak the English language fluently. You must go to America, and Edouard must return with you."

"I will go!" said I, "Lafayette——"

The Count seized my hand. "Find my son, but speak not to me of the Marquis Lafayette; 'twas he who turned the Vicomte's sympathies toward America. Were he in France——" His nervous fingers sought the hilt of his sword.

"Nay!" said Louis half sternly, "your anxiety hath carried you too far. 'Tis the spirit of a Frenchman that has led your son into this war. Yet I wish him to return, and you, De Marc, will bear my command to America."

As he turned away impatiently, signifying by a gesture that he wished to be alone, I bowed low and retreated to the corridor. The Count followed, closing the door softly.

"You have heard," said he, "the King commands that the Vicomte return to France. Tomorrow a fast corvette sails for America."

"Then," said I, "it will be necessary that I leave Versailles at once."

Taking my hand he continued feelingly:

"Your father and I, Henri, passed through many dangers together, and I have known you since infancy ; you are to me as a second son, yet I am about to send you into scenes and places which may contain many perils, I, who was your father's friend. But I know you will go, and——" He trembled, while moisture gathered in his eyes. I caught his hands in both my own.

"Count de le Mans," said I, "I go most willingly, for in leaving France I serve you. Beside, it has long been my wish to see America ; in an hour I shall be ready."

He threw his arms about my neck. "My son !" he cried, "my son !"

On reaching my room I sank exhausted into a chair to collect my thoughts. I was indeed overcome with emotion at the suddenness of events closing about me. That I might one day visit the Colonies, and perhaps strike a blow in behalf of the struggling patriots had long been a dream ; yet I had feared to make known my desire to the Count, for it had needed but a spark to kindle into flame the smothered longing of the Vicomte, to show open sympathy with the Americans. Lafayette, De la Rouerie, and many of his life-long friends had offered their services to General Washington, and had I followed their example, I well knew nothing would prevent Edouard from joining me. But now that he was on his way to America, this reason no longer existed, and I was sent by command of the King and my foster-father into the very path where ambition led me.

Glancing at the various articles about the room which long association had made dear, I decided upon taking but one—my father's sword. As I removed it from its place the thought flashed

upon me that to enter the field armed for battle might be a betrayal of the Count's confidence. Turning it carelessly the scabbard slipped from the blade and fell with a ring of steel at my feet. I read from this omen, that I should stand with naked weapon, and await events which might present themselves in the future. An hour later, when I bade adieu to the Count, the sword that had ever been drawn for the honor of France, was stored among the baggage on board the ship which in the morning sailed for America.

Filled with enthusiasm, as I stood upon its deck looking toward the distant shore, a glory seemed to be reflected on the far Western horizon, and I felt that to me it was but the brilliant opening of a brighter day.

CHAPTER I.**A GENTLEMAN OF FRANCE.**

THE thirtieth of September, 1780, found an undecurrent of apprehension throughout the Continental army. It was a time of appalling distrust. The capture six days previous of Major John André, adjutant-general of the British army, together with the papers concealed about his person revealing the treachery of General Benedict Arnold, had startled the country from its fancied security. General Washington, though outwardly calm, feared treason from any side. Every resource had been called into service to protect West Point, the nation's stronghold, from sudden surprise by the enemy. Vigilance was the price of safety ; Arnold had escaped to the British lines, and at any moment a fleet bearing an army of red-coats might appear upon the calm waters of the Hudson. Troops stationed on the eastern bank of the river, had been hurriedly transferred to the line of fortifications flanking the threatened Point. Colonel Wade's insufficient garrison was, at the urgent command of Washington, hastily reinforced by militia from Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and the neighboring Jerseys. General Greene, commanding the army at Tappan, was ordered to put the left division in motion immediately, that it might await further orders at King's Ferry. "All troops," wrote

Washington, "must be held in readiness to move at short notice."

André, the self-confessed spy, had been removed under an escort of Major Tallmadge's dragoons to strongly guarded quarters in the "76 Stone House" at Tappan. That the Commander-in-Chief feared he might escape through the assistance of unsuspected traitors in the American lines was shown by the order given to Colonel Scammel, adjutant-general of the Continental army. In addition to the regular sentries posted around the "House" two officers with drawn swords were kept constantly in the room with the prisoner, and others, trusted men, stationed in the hallway without.

Great was the tension of suspense pervading the Colonial ranks at the close of that momentous September day, in the war of the colonies against the British Crown. Small wonder then that a stranger riding through the country bordering on New York should be regarded with suspicion, and that many among the Americans constituted themselves a Paulding, Van Wart, or Williams, on the lookout to discover in each seemingly peaceful traveler one of Sir Henry Clinton's spies.

It was during this trying period in the history of the Colonies, that, after landing at Philadelphia, I set out for the headquarters of General Washington, where I doubted little that I should find the Vicomte le Mans, or learn something concerning him. Early in the afternoon, when riding on the road which, passing through the Jerseys leads to Tappan, I was halted by a detachment of those same dragoons, who, two days previous had escorted Major André to his prison within the American camp.

I was clad in a dress half military, half civilian, the whole covered by a gray cloak which in a measure concealed the gold hilt of the saber hanging at my side. That I was not of the Colonies was apparent, for, being bred amid the splendors of the proudest court in Europe, there was, perchance about my carriage more of the polished courtier than my dress and position called for.

The horsemen who surrounded me numbered perhaps half a score, and I could but illy conceal my admiration at their well-accoutered figures, martial bearing and excellent horsemanship.

"Friend," said I, saluting gravely one whom I perceived bore the rank of captain, "it is a matter of some moment that I reach ere nightfall the headquarters of your general; can you direct me thither?"

The request rendered with all the *sang froid* I could command, nonplused for a moment the leader of the troopers, so that he let go his hold upon my bridle-rein.

"Tis first necessary," said he, "that you account for your presence, an armed stranger within the American outposts."

I bowed courteously. "The request is a fitting one," replied I, "I am Henri de Marc, and but lately arrived from France; my errand hither is to deliver a message from his Majesty Louis XVI. to the Vicomte le Mans, who, we have reason to believe, is in the service of General Washington."

This explanation given without constraint, yet in a tone into which I threw some degree of haughtiness, altered instantly the demeanor of the soldiers.

"There is little reason to doubt the word of a French gentleman," replied the captain, "yet, 'tis the order of my superiors, that should any one unknown to me or to those of my command be found in proximity to our lines, he be straight-way conducted to headquarters, where are those who shall judge the reason of his errand hither. As a soldier I am therefore—"

"Enough!" I replied. "It is my pleasure to accompany you. Am I then your prisoner?"

The captain made a gesture of protest.

"Nay!" said I. "I warrant that the unsettled state of the times makes orders necessary, which as a soldier you must obey. Yet you may further my errand by recalling to memory whether the Vicomte le Mans be among the officers of your army."

The dragoon shook his head. "I do not recall the name, but it may be so; General Washington has but lately returned from Hartford, accompanied by the Marquis Lafayette; the Vicomte—"

My heart bounded at his words. "Lafayette here?" I cried joyfully. "Then indeed will I learn something of Edouard. Conduct me, I pray you, with all speed to headquarters, that I may see the Marquis as soon as possible."

At a word from their leader the dragoons fell in behind me, and the cavalcade moved at a canter in the direction of Tappan, where lay encamped the army of the Colonies.

Upon entering the lines I was struck with the orderliness of the soldiery. Here and there were groups seated before their quarters, who turned inquisitive eyes upon the newcomers, and upon the stranger who rode unconcernedly by their leader's side. At a little distance from the road a

company of raw militia was being drilled, their uncouth movements in strong contrast to the regiment of regulars, whose ranks deployed across a field, beyond which lay the headquarters of the commanding general.

As the scouting party approached the vicinity of the house occupied by General Washington, a group of officers standing before the entrance raised their eyes inquiringly.

"Major," said one, turning to a youthful soldier, "those dragoons of yours imbibe the spirit of their leader. Yonder they come with the spoils of war, in the guise of a dignified gentleman, who, I venture to assert, does scarce appreciate the honor of being escorted by so gallant a company."

The officer addressed turned toward the leader of the party, who, having left his command at a respectful distance, was approaching on foot, leading his charger by the bridle.

"What now, brings you in such haste to headquarters?" asked he sharply.

The dragoon explained his errand, pointing to me as I sat impassively in the saddle.

"A Frenchman!" exclaimed the Major, "say you he seeks the Marquis Lafayette?"

Bidding the dragoon await him he entered the house returning with a second officer, aid-de-camp to General Lafayette. Together they approached me, and perceiving their rank I saluted gravely.

"I am told," said Major Tallmadge, for 'twas he who commanded the dragoons, "that you are but late from France, and seek the Marquis Lafayette. This gentleman, Major McHenry, being aid-de-camp to that nobleman, you may, perhaps, state your errand to him."

I bowed. "I am known to the Marquis," replied I haughtily, "therefore the name of De Marc, or the Vicomte le Mans will doubtless gain for me the desired audience."

Before the others could reply there was a movement among the officers at the entrance of the headquarters, and looking in that direction I perceived a youthful figure standing on the threshold. It was Lafayette, who, having been in consultation with General Washington, was about to leave him.

At sight of the well-known figure an exclamation in French escaped my lips; it reached the ears of the Marquis.

Turning in surprise he fixed his eyes for an instant upon me, then, exclaiming: "'tis De Marc, and in America!" hurried to my side.

Had any doubt remained in the minds of the American officers as to the integrity of my story, it vanished before our greeting. Filled with joyful surprise that one should be present with him in the flesh, whom he supposed was at the Court of Louis XVI., Lafayette extended to me a true Frenchman's welcome. As to myself, springing lightly from the saddle, I clasped the Marquis's hands in both my own, with all the fervor of a long-absent comrade.

"*Allons!*" cried Lafayette, "'tis indeed a happy moment which comes to me. Has the Count then relented so quickly, and the Vicomte —? I saw none of you during my late visit to France."

I replied eagerly, relating briefly the causes which brought me to America. Then, anxiously: "Have you not seen Edouard?"

The Marquis shook his head: "I thought him

in France," said he, "if he is in America I know nothing concerning him. Yet you say he came before you?"

A troubled foreboding filled my heart. "He is not with you," I cried, "yet it is six weeks since he was last in Paris; if aught of ill has befallen him, then will the Count, his father—"

Lafayette interrupted. "Come!" said he, "we may yet learn something of him. Perchance he is in Philadelphia, or among the troops in New England. America is large, and there are many obstacles between the sea-coast and our camp."

Then, turning to the American officers who had withdrawn to a little distance: "Major Tallmadge, and you, McHenry, I would present to you M. de Marc, a friend of my boyhood, and a gentleman of the Court of France. I doubt not it is in his heart to draw sword for the cause of liberty."

"And 'tis for me to apologize," replied Tallmadge, "that through the orders issued by his Excellency, it became necessary for certain of my command—"

I smiled and extended my hand to the Americans. "Nay," said I, "it was but as an escort that the dragoons accompanied me hither."

Thus, having, with what delicacy I could, waived aside any idea that I might have considered myself discourteously treated, I went with Lafayette to be presented to General Washington.

The light-hearted Marquis had ever been a favorite with the Commander-in-Chief, so upon entering the headquarters of the latter, he led me without undue formality into the presence of the General, who, seated beside a table covered with

papers, was thoughtfully examining a letter received a few minutes before from the prisoner André.

He was habitually grave, and endowed by nature with a presence of calm dignity, but the danger to the cause so near his heart, which had been so narrowly averted, and the betrayal of trust by one of his most valued officers, sat heavily upon the commander of the Continental armies.

It was into the presence of a troubled, sad-faced man that Lafayette ushered me. At the unexpected reappearance of the Marquis who had but just left his side, Washington raised his eyes questioningly.

"Ah, Marquis!" said he pleasantly, "have you then returned so soon to complain that the luncheon—"

"Your Excellency will pardon me," replied Lafayette, "that I again venture to disturb—" A grave smile crossed the features of the General. "You are ever welcome, my dear Marquis," said he sincerely, "and your return is most opportune." Then, noting my presence, for I had remained in the shadow of the doorway, he arose from his seat, the hand holding the letter resting lightly upon the table.

"It is a pleasure to present to your Excellency," replied Lafayette, "a friend and countryman, M. Henri de Marc, who has within the week, arrived from the Court of France."

Washington with an effort threw off the cloud which rested upon his spirits.

"M. de Marc is welcome," said he courteously, and his eyes lighted with one of those benevolent smiles which frequently softened his aspect of calm seriousness. "Your countrymen

are ever welcome, Marquis, particularly one who possesses your confidence."

"M. de Marc has come to America to fulfill a mission entrusted to him by his patron, the Count le Mans," replied Lafayette, "yet I doubt not when his errand is accomplished, he will consider it an honor to proffer his services to your Excellency."

Washington bowed.

"And the service will be honored to receive his sword. You will doubtless see to it, Marquis, that M. de Marc receives every attention. Let him lack nothing at your hands."

Youthful, enthusiastic, a lover of chivalry, and an ardent admirer of the American leader, I could but inadequately express my appreciation of the welcome extended to me, a stranger. I comprehended in a degree, the greatness of this man, a feeling with which Washington inspired all who met him. After a courteous salute, I left his presence to accompany Lafayette to his headquarters, and within me arose a renewed desire to serve under so renowned a leader, the cause of the Colonies; nor would it tend to languish under the stimulating spirits of the youthful and enthusiastic Lafayette.

CHAPTER II.

CONCERNING A FAMOUS SPY.

THE events following the capture of the British spy, John André, culminated on the third day after my arrival in the American camp. The second of October opened clear and cloudless, but an atmosphere of gloom pervaded the Continental lines. It was the day fixed by General Washington, for the execution of the sentence imposed upon the youthful prisoner by the board of officers chosen to determine his fate.

On every side were heard expressions of sympathy for the doomed man. Had it been within the power of Washington consistently to set aside the verdict of the court, the sentence of death would have been mitigated. Of that I received the assurance of Lafayette. The prospective event had stirred the American nation to its center, and eager to make myself acquainted with the workings of the Colonial army, I expressed a desire to be present at the execution.

Washington, Lafayette and others in command, preferred to remain in their own quarters during the hour set apart for the carrying out of the sentence, and it was with Major McHenry therefore, that shortly after the hour of noon, I found myself near the spot where was erected the fatal gibbet. The place was thronged by an immense crowd of soldiers, civilians and farmers

many of whom had driven miles that they might witness the death of him who was to have consummated the treason of Arnold. On all sides I heard expressions of regret that he himself was not there, to pay the penalty of his attempt to betray the nation's fortress into the hands of the red-coats.

"It is well," said I turning to McHenry, "that your treacherous officer is safe within the English lines; the rage of a betrayed people is terrible."

The Major nodded grimly. "The gallows would be cheated," replied he shortly, "were Arnold here, he would not live to reach it. There is in the hearts of our people a sentiment, that nothing can excuse infidelity to trust, even were it in less perilous times than these."

The appearance of André, walking arm in arm between two subaltern officers, caused silence to fall upon the multitude. It was as though a mighty shadow swept over them, shutting out the brightness from above. Standing beside the gallows I gazed with curiosity upon the unfortunate man, who was so soon to suffer for his midnight mission within the Continental lines.

The countenance of the condemned was serene in the extreme as he passed with uplifted head between the lines. Dressed in the full uniform of a British officer, his bearing alert and active, he was in striking contrast to the spectators, upon whose faces had settled deep gloom and sadness. Indeed had a stranger, not knowing the cause, watched the procession to the scaffold, he might have taken as the condemned, Major Tallmadge, who accompanied the prisoner, rather than the intrepid André.

It was not until he came within sight of the

terrible framework erected, that his courage in a measure failed. Having earnestly requested of General Washington that he be shot, instead of meeting his death after the manner of a common criminal, although receiving no response, he had dismissed from his mind the dread fear.

When therefore his eye caught sight of the gallows, André started and I, who was close at his side, noted that his lips moved convulsively.

"Am I not then to die the death of a soldier?" he asked of his escort in a tremulous tone.

Upon being informed that it was not so to be, he clenched his hands, murmuring in a scarcely perceptible voice: "My fate is indeed a hard one, yet it will soon be over."

From that moment a nervousness seized him; his throat moved in vain efforts to swallow, and with the toe of his boot he rolled aside a stone which lay at his feet. Lifting his eyes he met my gaze fixed upon his face.

"Twill soon be over," he repeated in a natural voice, "'tis but a pang."

"Yes," replied I, moved to pity at the other's fortitude, "death will come quickly."

André bowed his head, then hesitating but an instant, stepped into the wagon waiting to receive him.

"The man's nerve is wonderful," whispered McHenry, "see he is himself placing the noose about his neck."

The condemned spy was indeed becoming in part his own executioner. Having adjusted the fatal rope, he calmly drew from his breast a handkerchief with which he covered his eyes. Being addressed by an officer, he produced a second with which his arms were bound.

A deathlike stillness pervaded the entire camp ; the lips of the condemned moved :

"I pray you to bear witness that I die like a brave man," said he aloud, then raised his hands as a signal that he was ready.

The wagon passed from under him, the body turning slowly until it faced me. I clutched McHenry's arm. "See," I whispered, "there is no struggle. He was indeed a brave man !"

Half an hour later returning to Lafayette's headquarters, I found the Marquis pacing restlessly up and down his narrow apartment.

"Come!" said he, as I presented myself. "André is dead and a painful suspense ended ; we can now turn our attention to your affairs. Inquiry so far has failed to bring to light anything concerning the Vicomte."

Oppressed by the scene I had but lately witnessed, I sank into a chair.

"I do not know which way to turn," said I dejectedly, "that Edouard has not sought you has baffled my plans. Can he have fallen into the hands of the English ?"

"Tis scarcely possible," replied Lafayette, "and beside, the Vicomte is not a combatant. He has doubtless been detained."

"Then?" I ventured.

The Marquis took a turn about the room. "I have explained your mission to General Washington," said he stopping, "and his Excellency has directed me to take such steps as I may consider wise. I have formed a plan which may succeed."

My face lightened.

"Under my command," continued Lafayette, "is an old soldier, one, John Clark, of whom I have taken much note, and I doubt not he will

consent to assist you. Would it not be wise that you first visit Hartford, where you will find certain officers attached to Rochambeau's command? It is quite possible that if the Vicomte landed in America, he joined the French forces now in New England. You are, however, a stranger to the country, and the companionship of an American will prove of service; to that end I have selected Clark, who is a man of much rough intelligence, and eminently trustworthy."

I grasped his hand.

"You are indeed a noble friend," cried I, "and the Count will keenly appreciate your efforts in his behalf."

Lafayette smiled. "'Tis nothing," said he lightly, "and indeed great pleasure to assist you. When the fortunate errand which brought you here is happily accomplished, the hope lies deep within my heart that you may become a compatriot. America has urgent need of such swords as yours."

"I have already decided," I cried enthusiastically, "when my duty to the Count is fulfilled, I shall return and offer my services to General Washington."

"Ah!" cried Lafayette, "may your work be accomplished speedily; I will at once summon your guide."

Scarce ten minutes elapsed ere Sergeant Clark entered the apartment. About fifty years of age, he was a typical representative of the Colonial regular. Reared amid the forests of northern New York, close upon the border of the great lake, from boyhood he had known the perils of Indian warfare, for the unsettled state of the country had been a constant source of danger to the border

settlers. Surviving the French and Indian War, in which he had been an active participant, he threw himself into the struggle for liberty against the British Crown, without thought of remuneration, content to be where conflict raged the hottest. Standing six feet in his ranger's uniform, the open countenance and easy bearing of the man attracted on the instant my admiration. Straight as an Indian, with clear cut, bronzed features, an eye dark and piercing, John Clark represented in his person the true sons of liberty, whose spirits were as free as the forest fastnesses from which they came.

Lafayette greeted him with more the manner of one who recognized worth in loyalty, than as a superior both through birth and circumstances.

"Sergeant," said he, returning Clark's salute, "his Excellency has requested me to send a man from my command to accompany M. de Marc on a mission which has brought him to America."

The stern lines about the soldier's mouth relaxed.

"I am ready to do your Lordship's pleasure," replied he, "even though the lesson of the morning—"

Lafayette raised his hand. "Speak not of that," said he. "M. de Marc seeks a French nobleman whom he believes to be in America, the necessity having arisen that he return to France. If there is any danger in the undertaking—"

The ranger smiled grimly. "So much the better," said he, "I am ready."

The Marquis turned to me. "And England would conquer such men," said he in French. "She little comprehends the spirit of her rebel-

lious children. Such are Greene, Stark, Wayne and a score of others."

"Twas thus arranged that I, accompanied by Sergeant Clark, should leave early the following morning. If the visit to Hartford proved fruitless, our future movements would be governed by circumstances and whatever information chance threw in our way.

It being thus arranged, Clark returned to his company, and I made ready to go with the Marquis to the headquarters of General Washington.

CHAPTER III.

BOURMONT HOUSE.

SOME two hours after sunrise, accompanied by Sergeant Clark, I left the American encampment at Tappan, following the road which would bring us to the ferry plying between the west shore of the Hudson, and the hamlet of Tarrytown. The clear air of the October morning banished the depression of the previous day, and it was with a feeling of light-heartedness that I contemplated the grandeur of God's handiwork, the stretches of green hills and meadows flanking on either hand the broad silver ribbon of the Hudson, which, to the northward disappeared beyond the shadow of gigantic highlands towering above the stream. The ranger, noting my admiration, rode silently by my side, nor did I venture to address him till we reached the ferry, a rude barge used for the transportation of men and horses across the river.

Upon reaching the east shore we came upon a picket who greeted my companion with much show of friendliness.

"You are afoot most early," said he, "yet with but one companion. Were a company of cavalry behind you something might be gained; the Cowboys are beyond the hills."

"Even so," replied the ranger, "have they then troubled the neighborhood again?"

"That they have," said the picket, "'twas

but last night close upon sundown, that half a score of the ruffians swooped down upon, and plundered several farm-houses five miles back. The Skinners, joined to a handful of illy-armed farmers, pursued them hotly, but darkness coming on, the chase was fruitless."

"Have they then gone?" asked Clark shortly.

The picket shook his head. "Not they," growled he, "nor can they be so easily driven from their purpose. I warrant that even now, having passed the night in the shelter of the woods beyond the ridge, they are planning some deviltry against Bourmont House."

"And would they attack so peaceable a dwelling?" cried Clark, "the hospitality of the place has ever been its security."

The other laughed. "The Cow-boys are little known at Tappan," replied he, "else would your question have remained unspoken. What care they for Mistress Bourmont and her daughters? There is food for men and beasts within the walls: family plate, and perchance certain gold pieces. As to the maids, a Cow-boy loves a pretty face, and does but a door stand between him and a kiss——"

"We ride past Bourmont House," eagerly interrupted my companion, "and it may be our fortune to fall in with these ruffians. They were doubtless afoot at sunrise, and I misjudge their temper if they strike not another blow before returning to the lower party."

"And in that case?" I asked, much perplexed at the conversation, for the names "Cow-boys" and "Skinners" were new to me.

"Why," replied the ranger, flecking a fly from the flank of his mare, "we must run for it, hav-

ing exchanged shots with an enemy whose numbers far exceed our own."

"Nay," replied the picket, "in an hour, if you tarry here, the Skinners will—"

Clark frowned contemptuously. "They are of the same breed," said he, "and 'tis little I like their company." Suiting his action to the word he set off at a brisk canter, I following in some amazement.

"Good sir," said I, having regained his side, "who are these ruffians of whom you speak?"

"Faith!" replied he, "I had forgotten that M. de Marc is a stranger to Westchester. We are now in the country lying between the Croton River on the north, and King's Bridge on the south, where are the British outposts: 'tis known as the 'Neutral ground.' To these Cow-boys and Skinners the territory is given over, roving bands of lawless marauders zealous in the plundering of farm-houses and defenseless travelers. The Skinners under pretense of serving the Colonies; the Cow-boys imitating the service of King George."

"But why are not these land pirates held in check?" I asked, "and wherefore, the Skinners, being Americans like yourself—"

The brow of the soldier darkened. "Were you not a stranger, M. de Marc," said he, half angrily, "you would scarce confound lawless marauders with the soldiers of General Washington. The ground being neutral from an established custom, 'tis given over to those who plunder friend and foe. The Skinners, not being of the army, are little to be trusted by any falling in their way, whether he wear the red of King George, or the uniform of the Colonies."

I expressed surprise that in the very midst of the contending armies, there existed a condition of such lawlessness.

"Be that as it may," replied Clark, "such it is, and 'twere well to keep your pistols handy."

"But what of this Bourmont House?" I ventured, "the name is French; you spoke of defenseless women?"

The ranger knitted his brows. "As to the Bourmonts," said he, "'tis a family well known in these parts, and perchance you will see them presently." Whereupon he gave me such of their history as had come to his ears, and much of it is still in my memory.

Bourmont House had been the property of one, Captain Jean Bourmont, a French Huguenot by descent, whose ancestors had for three generations dwelt and thrived in America. The good Captain was indeed no more, having fallen on the field of Saratoga. Despite his untimely end, Fate and his forefathers had provided for his family, so that there remained to it something more than the memory of the hardy soldier, and the sword taken from his dying hand by a comrade on the battle-field.

Captain Bourmont had been a thrifty man. At the age of nineteen he lost his parents, through the foundering of the ancient ferry-boat plying between Tarrytown and the opposite shore of the Hudson. By this unexpected calamity he had come into possession of the strong stone structure on the White Plains' road, its adjacent fields and woodlands, also a goodly sum of gold pieces stored behind the walls of a banking house, whose dingy windows looked out on Bowling Green. There seemed now no reason

why Bourmont House should not be provided with a mistress, and the desire of the youth was speedily gratified. Blessed by Providence with a good wife and safely invested fortune, he lived in happiness until at the age of fifty-five he fell before the fire of a British grenadier, and left surviving him, the mistress of Bourmont House, and four children to weep over the paternal saber left at their door by a crippled Continental.

Of the fifth generation of the American Bourmonts, the two sons had enrolled themselves under the command of General Washington during the early years of the war. There remained two daughters, Constance and Josephine, who, with Madame Bourmont occupied the ancestral homestead. Though the times were troublous, and the region in which they lived overrun with marauders, the three gentle women, guarded only by two male servants, feared little at the hands of the border chivalry. Born of a race to whom gallantry was an inherent virtue, their house was ever open for the dispensing of hospitality, nor was charity lacking.

Reared in a region which for four years had been the scene of bloodshed, the two girls had acquired a fortitude unknown in their earlier years. To the sturdy common sense inherited from their father, was added a gentleness of disposition, which drew toward them even those rougher spirits whose will was their only law, and to whom the circumstance of war had given unbridled license for depredations. Difficult would it have been for any, whose intimacy took them frequently to Bourmont House, to award the "golden apple" to either of the two; suitors they had in plenty, and among the British officers

stationed at New York, was one who carried next his heart the fair face of Constance in miniature. The war had rudely interrupted his wooing, nor would her loyalty to her father's cause permit of its continuation, until the land was at peace once more. Such was the family living here, on the morning following the execution of Major André.

We had ridden perhaps three miles and were approaching the vicinity of Bourmont House, a substantial stone structure standing somewhat back from the road which runs from Tarrytown to White Plains, when the Continental suddenly pulled up his horse. At the same instant there appeared at the bend of the road, some fifty rods ahead, a rustic, riding at breakneck speed a steed without saddle or bridle ; catching sight of us he checked his animal by tugging furiously at its mane.

“To the rescue ! Good gentlemen, to the rescue !” shouted he, uplifting his hands in a gesture of entreaty.

“What now ?” growled the ranger with difficulty curbing his horse, which, frightened at the other's antics, threatened to pitch its rider into the bushes. “To whose rescue ?”

“To Mistress Bourmont and her daughters !” cried the rustic, “if they be not dead, or carried off—”

“Tis then the Cow-boys !” cried Clark reaching toward his holsters, “and at Bourmont House ! Yet your fright has magnified the danger ; a few pigs and a cow or two will—”

“Not so,” cried the rider, who, having regained something of his courage and breath, spoke more coherently. “They are drunk with cider

stolen from Farmer Quinn's cellar, and would do the women injury. To the rescue, therefore, while I alarm the neighbors!" Striking his knees against the sides of the nag he hurried past, covering us with a cloud of dust.

An oath arose to the ranger's lips. "'Tis indeed time to act," said he, "having filled themselves with drink the ruffians will know no bounds; but you—"

"To Bourmont House by all means," I replied, gathering up the reins, "if women be in danger it were small courtesy to our manhood to tarry here."

Clark nodded in approval. "Forward, then!" cried he, "'tis scarce a mile to the homestead." And plunging his spurs into the horse's flanks he set off at a mad gallop.

Bourmont House stood some two hundred paces back from the main highway, in the center of a shady grove of elms and maples, while beyond stretched a broad field flanked by the rocky hills which form the backbone of Westchester county. Having come within sight of the dwelling, the ranger pulled up his horse.

"It would be folly to attack them from the front, where an enemy is most expected," said he, "let us, therefore, leave our animals, and on foot gain the rear of the house, unperceived."

Hastily dismounting we fastened our horses to a tree, removed the pistols from the holsters, and plunged with as little noise as possible into the underbrush. A run of five hundred yards brought us to the tall hedge which flanked the garden behind the gray stone edifice. Having reached this shelter, Clark paused to regain his breath. "They are yonder," said he, pointing to an opening in the

grove before the house. "Ten crowding about the door, and two on guard over the horses."

I looked in the direction indicated.

Before the door of Bourmont House the Cow Boys, half drunk with stolen cider, clamored for admission. From the window above a woman was speaking to the motley gang, but so great was the distance we could not hear her words.

Suddenly there was a shout from the marauders, followed by a musket shot, upon which the speaker at the window hastily withdrew.

"They have murdered her," I cried, "let us fall upon them."

"Clark caught me by the shoulder. "Not yet," said he, "we must first gain the shelter of the wall," and thrusting his pistols into his belt, he dropped upon his hands and knees, crawling Indian fashion along the ground toward a point where an angle of the house might be gained unperceived by those in front.

Unfamiliar with the manner of forest warfare, I gazed upon the prostrate figure of my companion in astonishment, but perceiving that he was fast leaving me, I too fell upon my stomach imitating his example.

The discharge of the musket before the house was followed by another savage outburst on the part of the Cow-boys, and a furious onset was made against the heavy oaken door. The noise of the attack quickened our movements. Just then, above the tumult sounded a second and a third shot, and two puffs of smoke floated from the open window above the doorway.

"Good!" muttered the ranger raising himself on his elbow, "the house must be defended."

A cry of agony from one of the Cow-boys who

was battering at the door followed the second shot from the window ; a musket ball had pierced his breast and stretched him lifeless on the ground.

The cry of the stricken man was followed by a fusillade from his companions, when, the contents of their guns being exhausted, they withdrew to escape a third discharge from the defenders. For five minutes all remained silent, during which time Clark and I gained the angle of the wall, and crouched down within pistol-shot of the space before the door.

Having consulted with his fellows, the leader of the Cow-boys advanced toward the house holding aloft a white handkerchief.

“ It would be best for you to surrender quickly,” cried he, addressing the open window, “ we are but the advance guard of Sir Henry Clinton’s army who have this night marched into Westchester. Unbar the door or no quarter will be granted you.”

“ And what security,” replied a voice from within, “ have we, that this is not a trap to place us in your power ? ”

“ This ! ” cried the Cow-boy, “ that—— ”

A sharp report followed by a puff of smoke at the angle of the house, turned his words into a death rattle, and dropping the handkerchief he fell halfway between his companions and the doorway.

“ Liar ! ” muttered Clark, coolly reloading his pistol, “ In this way he would deceive three helpless women. Stand ready, M. de Marc, to pick off the first who shows himself ; if not surprised from the flank, we are well fortified.”

So quick had been his action, that not only the enemy, but I also, scarce comprehended what

had happened, yet, I leveled my pistol toward the spot where were gathered the remaining Cow-boys.

"We must be on the watch for the unbarring of the rear door," continued the ranger, "perchance those inside——"

He interrupted himself with another shot. One of the Cow-boys had exposed a portion of his person from behind a tree and the Continental's bullet tore away the bark not two inches from the mark.

I uttered an exclamation. "I saw no one," said I, "yet you fired."

My companion laughed. "It is perhaps a gift," he chuckled, "and I presume you have but scant knowledge of the Indian—Ah!"

The exclamation was caused by a sudden movement on the part of the enemy. Recovered from its surprise, the party had divided and the ranger had seen several dark forms running through the woods that a flank movement might be carried out.

Scarce a minute elapsed before a ringing report and the thud of a bullet against the stones above my head warned me that one, at least, of the enemy had gained his point.

"We are in a trap," cried I, "let us fight in the open!"

"Down!" shouted my companion discharging his pistols in the direction of the fence. "We lie upon the ground and they must expose themselves to reach us."

At the same instant two reports mingling into one, sounded in my ears, and I felt a sharp sting above the elbow of my left arm. Looking quickly toward the fence, I saw a Cow-boy arise from

the bushes, throw up his arms and plunge forward upon his face, while from a window directly above our heads, floated a puff of gray smoke.

"It saved your life," cried Clark, pointing upward, "the bullet turned the fellow's aim, we—"

A furious shouting from the direction of the highway interrupted him. There was a clattering of hoofs, a dozen musket shots, and around the bend swept a score of Skinners waving their weapons above their heads, and hurling curses at the now panic-stricken Cow-boys.

In an instant each had sprung into his saddle, gained the open road and, with the Skinners in hot pursuit, were galloping madly eastward. Faint and dizzy I leaned against my companion, who had turned toward the rear door of the homestead. Unperceived by us amid the sudden excitement caused by the arrival of reinforcements, it had been opened from within, and upon the threshold stood Josephine Bourmont holding a musket in her hand.

CHAPTER IV.

MCDOWELL, OF THE CAROLINAS.

SURPRISED at the unexpected appearance of the young girl, for a moment I forgot my wound and started involuntarily toward her. It did not require Clark's exclamation that the shot from the window had diverted the Cow-boy's aim to assure me it was to this I owed my life. Josephine Bourmont (for, upon the opening of the door my companion uttered her name,) had saved me from the bullet of the marauder, and a sense of gratitude impelled me forward despite the faintness which the shock occasioned.

For a moment the girl stood upon the threshold, the barrel of the musket clasped tightly, her gray eyes fixed upon us, and her bosom heaving with suppressed excitement. Then, ere I could reach her side, the flush upon her cheek faded, the musket fell with a rattle upon the stones, and Clark bounding past me, caught her in his arms.

“ ‘Tis a faintness,” he exclaimed, “a woman’s way. Having slain an enemy the thought has overcome her.”

This was true ; the child, unused to bloodshed, recoiled at the work of her hands ; when the excitement of the moment passed, her gentle nature asserted itself, and she realized the horror of her deed. It was to Madame Bourmont therefore I expressed my obligation to the daughter. The

surprise of the worthy matron was great, when, upon descending from the apartment facing the space which the enemy had lately occupied, she learned it was her youngest child whose quickness of purpose and steadiness of aim had saved my breast from the hostile bullet. Nor could her daughter explain the impulse which led her to seize a musket from the stand in the hall, and fire upon the Cow-boy.

My wound was trifling, yet having bled freely, I accepted with thankfulness the attention which the mistress of the house bestowed upon me. All thought of riding further that day was dismissed at her command, for having received me in so unexpected a manner into her household, it accorded little with the widow's sense of hospitality that one wounded in defense of her and hers should be permitted to go forth until all physical discomfort was passed. To this Clark added a voice, though in his eyes I noted a shadow of pleasantry, while he exchanged a few whispered words with Constance Bourmont, concerning wounds and fevers, and the ill-consequences to one thus stricken, which might follow too early an exposure to the fatigue of a journey in the saddle. Perceiving I was a prisoner, held by bands of courtesy and gratitude, I perforce accepted a few hours of idleness, resolving to resume my journey on the morrow in company with the ranger.

Scarcely had I been an hour in Bourmont House, when I discerned the truth of Clark's words concerning Mistress Bourmont and her daughters. Brought up as I had been amid the splendors of Versailles and Paris, the simplicity by which I was surrounded attracted me strange-

ly. I turned to the younger daughter with an unaccustomed feeling. She had saved my life to be sure, but there was something more, a kindness of spirit, a girlish freshness, lacking in the ladies of the Court, and to which hitherto I had been a stranger. A few moments in her company revealed the fact that she was a tender plant, unfamiliar with the world; at an age when both child and woman struggle for ascendancy, yet withal possessing a fearlessness, a freedom, which appealed to me. In her pale clear face and gentle brow I read a confidence born of innocence; an appreciative word brought to her lips a smile of pleasure. She seemingly listened with more interest than the others to my words, as I made known my mission to America, and spoke of the Court and of the King. France had ever been to her a dream of Paradise; 'twas the birthplace of her ancestors, and what I told was new to her.

When I spoke concerning my intention to serve the cause of the Colonies, the eyes of my listeners glowed with enthusiasm. From that moment the guest became the friend, and the formality, which to a certain degree Madame Bourmont had maintained, gave place to a motherly anxiety for my welfare, and, while it embarrassed, filled me with emotion.

I had thought to resume my journey to Hartford on the following day, but Fate willed otherwise. My wound induced a fever, which, in the field perhaps would have spent itself, but to the watchful eye of the widow seemed of serious nature, and she decided that for my safety I should remain under her care till such time as danger was, in her mind, passed. Thus, for two

days I tarried at Bourmont House, during which they told me of the brothers. The eldest was then in Pennsylvania ; the other, more reckless in disposition, had attached himself to the staff of the unfortunate Gates, the news of whose disaster in the Carolinas had, a short time previous to the capture of Major André, reached the ears of General Washington. Great disquietude reigned at Bourmont House over the defeat of the army at Camden, for no message had been received from the youthful soldier, although six weeks had elapsed since the battle.

Clark returned to Tappan, bearing a message to General Lafayette explaining the cause of my delay in reaching Hartford ; then appeared again at Bourmont quite early on the morning of the third day, accompanied by a soldier of the Carolinas, who brought news which sent me where I had little reckoned upon, also a message from the absent son.

With Constance Bourmont I had ventured upon the road leading to Tarrytown, and the clear air of the morning invigorated me. Some distance beyond the spot where Clark and I had left our horses three days previous, we perceived two men approaching from the direction of the river. They proved to be the ranger and his companion, who, as they espied us, urged forward their animals, and were soon at our side with a greeting.

The second man aroused my interest, for such types were strange to me, nor in the camp at Tappan had I met with any like him : Of powerful build, broad-shouldered and muscular ; a figure well set off by the wild mountain garb covering it, which consisted of a buckskin hunting shirt, and leggings decorated with colored

fringe and tassels. His long black hair was crowned by a tight-fitting lynx-skin cap, adorned with a buck's tail from which the wind and weather had stripped the greater portion of hair. His face, bronzed to the hue of an Indian was set in a bushy beard streaked with gray; the forehead high and broad, brows shaggy, the eyes black and piercing. Across his saddle rested a rifle of uncommon length, and from his belt protruded the horn haft of a hunting knife.

"'Tis Captain McDowell," said Clark, noting my glance of inquiry, "of the Carolinas, and brings a message from Captain Bourmont who lies wounded at—"

Constance Bourmont uttered a cry. "My brother wounded? Oh, sir, if—"

The stranger fixed his eyes upon the pale face of the maiden.

"Fear not," said he, in a voice which, despite his efforts to render soft, sounded harsh and guttural, "it happened at Camden, and six weeks having passed, the worst is over. I seek Mistress Bourmont."

With an unconscious gesture the girl caught my hand. "Sir!" said she, raising her head proudly, "we are of those who meet misfortune quietly; if my brother—"

A flash of admiration crossed McDowell's countenance. "It was a musket ball through the side," said he, "but 'tis mending."

Concluding abruptly, he touched the flank of his horse lightly with the spur, and cantered before us down the road toward the manor house. Noting my surprise at so rude a leave-taking, Clark smiled grimly.

"Such are they who dwell among the moun-

tains of the south," said he, "the man is rude of habit, but his heart is loyal. Let us follow him."

The appearance of the southerner before the door of the homestead brought Madame Bourmont and her younger daughter to the threshold, where, having hastened on before us, Constance joined them; Clark and I following more leisurely.

"Where met you the man?" asked I, "at the headquarters of General Washington?"

"It was on the road hither," replied the ranger, and as he helped himself to a generous wedge of tobacco related the adventure.

Upon leaving the headquarters at Tappan soon after sunrise, he rode with no great show of haste to the ferry. Reaching the east bank of the river, the picket who, on a previous occasion, had warned us against the Cow-boys, accosted him. Clark returned the greeting and would have ridden on when the soldier stopped him.

"You go to Bourmont House," said he, "the second since sunrise. Just now passed a trooper from the south, who inquired of me the way."

"Then he must be a stranger," replied the Sergeant, "for even the horses can find their way to Bourmont."

"A stranger, indeed," answered the picket, "a fellow of the wilderness, who has ridden long and hard. I had it from him that he bore a message from the Carolinas."

Clark pushed his horse forward. "If he rides not too fast," said he, "I will overtake him;" and putting spurs to the animal galloped off, sending from the road-bed a cloud of dust.

Some two miles back from the river three roads

met at an angle: one, upon which the ranger rode, another leading northward to Sing Sing, and the third bearing toward White Plains. It was at this junction Clark came upon the messenger from the south. He had pulled up his horse, much perplexed as to which road he should follow.

As the ranger approached, the man turned quickly toward him, and noting the uniform of a regular, waited for Clark to reach his side.

"Friend," said he, "you have come in good time; I would ride to Bourmont House, but have lost my reckoning."

Meanwhile he scanned the Sergeant critically.

"I thought to find you on the road," replied Clark, pulling up his horse. "You are of the Carolinas?"

A smile touched the corners of the other's mouth. "'Twas the picket who told you," said he, "know you of Bourmont House?"

"I am bound thither," answered Clark, "hence, as you surmised, learning from the picket that a messenger was before me, I made haste to overtake him. Is it a letter from Captain Bourmont?"

The other nodded, saying: "Which I am in haste to deliver, for before another sunset I must ride forth again."

The ranger looked at his companion in surprise. The man had been in the saddle for many hours, yet he spoke of returning to the south with scarce breathing time for himself or animal.

"In a half hour we may reach our destination," said he, "and, perchance, having once partaken of the Bourmont hospitality, it will please you to tarry for a day or two. You are of—"

"Marion's command," replied the stranger shortly, "James McDowell; and you, as I perceive, are of the regulars?"

Conversing thus, the two rode at a canter side by side, Clark explaining the nature of the country, the presence of the Cow-boys, and things of which the other, a stranger to the region, had no knowledge.

"And of Captain Bourmont?" asked he, "the boy is safe?"

"He was wounded at Camden," replied McDowell, "and is yet unable to take the field."

"Meager news has reached us of the battle," said Clark, "'tis said that Gates neglected caution and threw away his army."

A grim smile crossed his companion's face. "Many things are said," replied he, "some of which may overreach the truth; yet—we lost the battle."

"I would know something concerning it," ventured Clark, "what news General Washington has received is known only among the officers. I have heard it was no fault of the soldiers that Cornwallis drove them from the field."

McDowell pressed his lips together. He was a man of few words, little given to gossip, but the Sergeant's personality pleased him, and he recognized a kindred spirit, a sterling character, above the general order of militia, and, like himself a patriot.

Those two men—from the north and the south were indeed similar, and to such types the country owed its freedom; to this sort Washington turned in moments of discouragement.

For a time the southerner remained silent, as though gathering from memory the divergent

threads of the narrative which his companion desired to hear.

“It is known,” said he at length, bringing his horse to a walk, “that our defeat at the hands of the Lords Cornwallis and Rawdon, was a decisive one; ‘tis not for me to say that the matter might have been brought to a different issue. The rumor reached me that Colonel Williams, De Kalb, and others of the officers opposed the plan of General Gates in moving upon Camden, where the British were under Lord Rawdon. The enemy truly occupied a strong position, guarded by redoubts, and flanked by streams on either side. About the movements of the army on the eve of battle I will say nothing. Just after night-fall we were ordered to prepare for an attack upon the enemy’s position, the commander being minded to gain such advantage as lay in a surprise. We advanced carefully, each man picking his way in the darkness, the path running through thick woods, swamps and un-tilled meadows. Thus we continued pressing forward until two hours after midnight, when a movement among the advance guards warned us of some unexpected occurrence. From out the darkness and silence came flashes of fire, sounds of musketry, shouts, and orders. Not comprehending so sudden an outbreak, our soldiers stood irresolute. The British camp lay three miles away, yet our advance was firing, and above the sharp crack of their rifles sounded the dull, regular roar of a well-timed discharge; the voice of the enemy’s grenadiers. Gates was thunderstruck, nor until a dozen volleys had been fired did he understand the meaning of the tumult; the British had also advanced, and the two armies blundered upon

each other in the darkness. Later we learned that it was Cornwallis, and before another sunset had good cause to remember him.

"Until daybreak, the two forces opposed each other, neither commander daring to order a general attack in the moonless night.

"At early dawn the enemy opened the battle. Looking through the white mists which hid the meadows and the fields, I saw the red-coated column advancing, its first rank moving with the greatest regularity, and opposed to it the raw militia of the Carolinas.

"The air began to fill with light ; a pale gleam silvered the musket barrels and twinkled on a hundred naked sabers, bringing out of the shade the tall caps of the grenadiers and their threatening faces. In another moment the first streaks of white smoke arose from the advancing column ; the militia trembled, wavered for an instant, then fled in confusion, exposing to the fire of the enemy the regulars of Delaware and Maryland. These answered volley with volley ; the advancing red-coats hesitated, the smoke hung over the field of battle in a dense cloud, covering the whole scene of conflict ; and from out its shadows, shouts of triumph, screams, and the clang of steel. Flags shone, then fell in the vapors ; sharp yells from the Americans, while the British regulars were thrown into confusion. At that moment a dark cloud of cavalry appeared as if risen from the ground ; 'twas Tarleton's dragoons, who, with flashing sabers, oaths, and smothered shouts, fell upon the flank of the Americans, throwing the Delaware brigade into confusion, and driving it from the field. The air was filled with the whinnying of horses, the shouts of combatants

and groans of dying men. The regulars of Maryland stood firm, but fast advancing columns of the enemy pressed upon them from three sides ; four regiments armed with bayonets against a handful of riflemen.

“ Fighting in the front rank I saw the first line of the enemy halt. Through the hazy cloud of smoke rung the command : ‘ Cock your muskets ! The gun-barrels moved like one, the muzzles covering us. A roar shook the air, a line of smoke flew along the side of the red-faced rank, and the bullets fell among us like shafts of lightning—while close upon them came mounted men—Tarleton’s cavalry.”

McDowell paused, then touched his horse’s flank with the spur. “ That was the battle,” said he, “ you know the end. The militia fled too soon, the regulars remained too long ; many good men were sacrificed.”

It was at this point of the narrative that the two came upon me and my companion.

“ And of the Marquis ? ” asked I, Clark having finished.

“ Sir,” replied he, taking from his pocket a letter which he handed me, “ the contents of this paper I had from General Lafayette ; as you will see, there is small need that we ride to Hartford.”

Amazed at his words I hastily opened the missive and cast my eye over it.

“ Then, you know,” cried I, “ that in Lafayette’s opinion the Vicomte le Mans is not at Hartford, but in the south.”

Clark nodded. “ I was told,” said he, “ of General Lafayette’s receiving knowledge that three Frenchmen were in Philadelphia some days

since, who, seeking adventure, had set forth for the Carolinas."

"'Tis even so," replied I, "and the Marquis believes the Vicomte was one of them. My way leads therefore southward, and you——"

"I accompany you," replied the ranger shortly, "General Lafayette has so requested, nor is it against my inclination to strike a blow at Lord Cornwallis; and we will not ride alone."

In answer to my look of interrogation he pointed to McDowell, who, surrounded by the women, stood beside his horse before the door of Bourmont House.

"A man from the Carolinas," said he, "and returns to-morrow. If your wound——"

"'Tis nothing!" cried I, "we will accompany him."

The message from the south overshadowed as by a dark cloud the Bourmont household. From the mother, McDowell had not concealed the truth that her son was sorely wounded, which she comprehended, and the rough sympathy of the soldier, who assured her that a fatal termination was scarce likely, comforted her but little. Although apprehensive and full of anxious desire to hasten to his side, she knew such a course was impracticable, so it was therefore with great thankfulness she learned of my purpose to accompany the messenger on the morrow. Nor did I hesitate to promise that the welfare of Captain Bourmont should be very near my heart.

Late in the afternoon I took leave of the household, and set forth with my two companions upon the road leading to Tarrytown. I purposed spending the night at Tappan, proceeding southward the following morning.

CHAPTER V.

WHAT BEFELL AT RED HOUSE TAVERN.

SEVERAL days after my departure from Bourmont House, riding in company with Clark and McDowell southward, I found myself close upon the boundary line between Virginia and the northern Carolina. Near sunset, the southerner, being a few paces in advance, pulled up his horse.

"Yonder," said he, pointing to a sparse grove of pines through which could be seen the red walls of a house, "stands a tavern somewhat known to me. It would be well to use it for a stopping-place; our beasts are weary."

As was his wont Clark nodded silently, I assented to the proposal, and our guide, for such McDowell had constituted himself, led the way into the lane, which branching at a sharp angle from the main highway ended at the door of the hostelry.

The dwelling in which we elected to pass the night was of the kind commonly found throughout the south at that period, yet the thrift of its owner had added somewhat to it, for the rough pine logs, which formed its walls, were covered by clapboards tightly fitted together, and painted a dull red; from this circumstance the inn was known in the neighborhood as "Red House." The structure was long and narrow, a rude loft

serving as a sleeping place for those who sought its hospitality. The walls, of sufficient thickness to withstand a musket ball, were pierced by half a dozen windows, furnished with heavy shutters, which could be barred upon the inside did occasion for defense arise. A great chimney of rough stone projected from the main wall, the inner side fashioned into a huge fireplace of such dimensions that a log, the weight of which would tax the strongest man, could rest easily between its sides.

As we approached the door, I noted some twenty paces beyond the further end of the building a shed, wherein stood a single horse engaged with its evening meal of grain and hay.

"There is a guest," muttered McDowell, casting a searching glance at the animal, "but whether he is of the army, or only a country squire, I know not; if the latter, 'twere best to use circumspection, for there are many in these parts who remain faithful to King George."

The sudden appearance of the landlord precluded a reply. Issuing from the narrow door, he looked at us with some anxiety, until his gaze resting upon our guide, the frown faded from his brow.

"Welcome, good gentlemen!" cried he advancing a pace, "you are, I perceive, of the Colonies."

"As to that," replied McDowell resting his rifle carelessly in the hollow of his arm, "'tis a matter of small consequence. Have you room for three peaceful travelers within the tavern?"

"That have I," replied the host, his small eyes wandering over our persons, "though the war has——"

"Supper, a glass of rum, and a pile of straw

will make you richer by some silver pieces," interrupted McDowell gruffly. And dismounting, he turned as though to lead his horse to the shed. "Ho!" cried he, stopping suddenly; "there are guests within; perchance some squire, or——"

"Nay," retorted the landlord, "'tis a soldier—from the south."

McDowell silently gestured that Clark and I should dismount and follow him into the shed, then turning to the landlord, said:

"If he is peacefully disposed, four will sit at your table; go, therefore, and acquaint him with our presence."

The man hastened within, the prospect of silver pieces adding zest to his movements. McDowell fastened his horse, removed the saddle and turned to us.

"The country is unsettled," growled he, "and I do not know whether yon soldier from the south may be to our liking; leave me to answer should he question us too closely."

After attending to the comfort of the horses, no hostler appearing for that purpose, we turned toward the door of the inn, which standing open, seemed to bid us enter with scant formality.

The interior of the place was decidedly barren in appearance, it holding naught save a half score of rude benches, a large cupboard in one corner of the room, and a long table opposite the fireplace in which a log sputtered fitfully. I noted the rafters above my head were blackened with smoke and age, the floor of rough pine boards, and the way to the loft a stout ladder set against the wall. The windows of the apartment were open, and through them shone the red rays of the setting sun.

Directly opposite one of these openings, his arms resting idly on the table, sat the man whom the landlord had styled "a soldier from the south." The descending light fell full upon his face, and, trained to form conclusions quickly, I liked but little the countenance of the stranger. His eyes were of a steely blue, his features large, the jaw square, but lacking firmness. A drooping blonde mustache partially covered the outlines of his mouth, matching in hue the carefully arranged locks, worn shorter than the custom of the period, but reaching to his collar and brushed back above the ears. Added to these was a frame of goodly proportions, shoulders which denoted strength, and hands, the whiteness of which told me the owner was unused to manual toil. I knew not at the time the cause of my sudden dislike to the man, unless it might have been a certain expression upon his face as he raised his eyes to mine. He wore the uniform of an officer of the Colonies, and therefore should be taken for a friend, but something in his glance, in the play of his eyes, the blonde hair and drooping mustache, pleased me little, and turned my heart against him. Perchance there was some subtile power, an unerring instinct which a man often feels when in the presence of one who would do him injury, closing the door to good-fellowship ere the uttering of a word.

As we entered he shifted his position and drummed carelessly upon the table. McDowell was the first to break the silence.

"Friend," said he, "I perceive you are of the Colonies—of Gates' command?"

The stranger raised one hand indolently and stroked for a moment the drooping mustache. I

heard Clark, who stood close behind me, mutter contemptuously, then, the other replied :

“ Of Gates’ command, though the affair at Camden warrants scant boasting to those who wear my uniform.”

The dark eyes of the Carolinian flashed angrily, but he restrained his rising temper.

“ As you say,” replied he shortly ; “ we will share the tavern ; ride you southward on the morrow ? ”

“ You are of the Carolinas,” said the stranger, ignoring with a wave of his hand the question. “ The tavern is, methinks, big enough for all of us, yet the times are troublous, and I would know who thus honor me with their company.”

Had he put to me the question, I wwould have answered with much haughtiness ; his manner of speech and inflection of voice pleased me as little as his countenance, but McDowell, loth to breed unfriendliness, replied easily :

“ These gentlemen are M. de Marc, and Sergeant Clark of the regulars ; I am of the Carolinas.”

The other burst into a hearty laugh. “ Faith ! ” cried he, “ one would think we sought a quarrel. I am Major Brooks, late of the staff of General Gates whom Cornwallis——”

The entrance of the host with sputtering candles which he placed upon the table preparatory to laying the evening meal, interrupted further conversation. We partook of it as the shadows grew black, and the night birds began to make known their presence in the surrounding woods. Meanwhile our new companion talked much and loudly, Clark not at all, and McDowell and I but briefly. That the ranger shared my dislike to the

Major I perceived, but if the man noticed it he betrayed nothing of his thoughts.

"It is indeed a pity that the English have so overrun the country," said he; "one has but scant time to become familiar with such women as please the eye, before a company of dragoons sweeps down upon him. It has been said that 'tis against the rules of war for victors to seize such females as suit their fancy, but to me 'tis most natural; none need cry to me for protection; it touches no responsive chord."

I came near resenting his words, but McDowell forestalled what was in my mind. Rising quickly from the table he signified to our host that, having ridden far, we would fain seek repose, as daybreak must find us up and in the saddle. I cared little about the plans of Major Brooks; we left him with scant ceremony, seated by the table, a glass of rum at his elbow, and fingers idly toying with the pipe which he had drawn from his pocket, nor surmised that ere sunrise we were to see him again.

A deep, dreamless slumber followed the fatigue of ten hours, hard riding, from which I was suddenly awakened as though by a hand upon my shoulder. It was dark within the loft. I started to a sitting posture and perceived against the dim light of the opening into the room below, the forms of my two companions intently listening; heard the sound of voices; the bantering tones of the Major, and another, whose words were indistinct, and who spoke only at intervals. The rustle of the straw as I moved brought a gesture from Clark to make no noise. Amazed and somewhat disturbed, I remained motionless.

"Faith!" I heard the Major say laughingly,

"Think you I am a beardless youth like yon snoring Frenchman? Though petticoats be wanting to add charm to the caress, I warrant thy lips will make amends."

A low cry broke from the other, and there was a clatter of furniture upon the rough board floor.

"Ho!" cried the Major, and his low laugh grated unpleasantly upon my ear, "from behind a table you would mock me. Come, sir youth, afore I lose my temper and take by violence what should be freely given. Is then the uniform of a—"

"'Tis for one who wears that uniform to protect, not to play the ruffian," replied a voice which startled me.

A laugh answered the appeal. "You would deny me?" cried the fellow, "come! one kiss, and my sword will protect you from those who might, perchance ask more. Above lie sleeping three who would take scant reckoning of blushing maidenhood, clad in breeches; one kiss, therefore, and—"

The crash of the table told that the ruffian sought to gain by violence what the woman, for such it seemed his companion was, refused to yield.

"Coward!" I heard her cry. "Coward! but I am not defenseless!"

Then followed the sharp crack of a pistol, and an oath from the Major. I sprang up quickly, but the Americans were before me. With an exclamation, McDowell dropped through the opening, unheeding the ladder in his haste, and the sudden sound of his fall came up to me as he struck the floor below. Following Clark, who was

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climbing down, we came upon a scene I have never forgotten.

In the dim light cast by the sputtering flames of the candles standing upon the shelf above the fireplace, McDowell and the Major were struggling desperately. Near the open door stood a figure which at the first glance seemed to be a youth, clad in jacket, knee breeches, ruffled shirt and riding boots. The face was in shadow, but upon the shoulders of the stripling fell a mass of chestnut hair, and the small white hands, one of which grasped the butt of a pistol, revealed the woman.

Clark, who was crossing the room, uttered an exclamation, but of her I took small account ; the struggling forms of the two men drew my attention. Half a minute they swayed back and forth upon the hearthstone, the Carolinian in silence, the other uttering stifled oaths. The hand of the mountaineer suddenly reached for the Major's throat, and clasped it with a grasp of iron. The curses became inarticulate, the steely blue eyes turned upward in agony, and the shapely hands clutched the rigid wrist of McDowell convulsively. Then, in an instant, the bulky form of the officer was hurled across the room, upon the overturned table, with a crash which set the candles dancing.

"Coward!" muttered the Carolinian, "'tis such as you who disgrace the name of manhood."

As he spoke the Major's hand went to his pocket, and half rising upon his elbow, he leveled a pistol at McDowell's head.

My own weapon was out upon the instant, and I know not which would have fired first, had not Clark, who stood near the prostrate ruffian, leaped

upon him, and with a well-directed kick sent the pistol flying from his hand. I thought the man's wrist was broken, for uttering a scream he rolled upon the hearth among the ashes. The dark eyes of the ranger flashed ominously ; before we could guess his purpose, he seized the fellow with a strength gained by years of labor and activity, and lifted him from the floor, sending him through the open door into the darkness without.

For a moment silence, save for the deep breathing of the enraged American and the stifled scream of the woman, reigned in the tavern ; then, fearing lest the defeated ruffian might return with sword in hand, I sprang to the doorway. A grim smile flitted across the Sergeant's face.

"Have no fear," said he, "the man will not trouble us again this night, yet there is one thing more."

Taking a candle he pushed past me and bent over the form of the Major who lay upon his face beyond the threshold. Setting the light upon the ground he then tore off the sword belt and coat, with but scant ceremony. To the frightened landlord, who, aroused by the pistol shot and the sound of scuffling, had appeared musket in hand, he said :

"A rope, good sir, that I may bind this fellow ; having cast disgrace upon the uniform, perhaps he will fire the house, or disable the horses under cover of the darkness."

So intent had I been upon the ranger's actions, that the presence of the woman was quite forgotten, until I felt the pressure of a hand upon my shoulder, and a voice murmured in my ear :—

"M. de Marc, I—"

Turning in surprise my eyes met those of the

seeming youth whose arrival at the inn had brought about the Major's discomfiture. For a moment no recognition came to me, although the voice aroused memories. Then, as half turning her face, the light from the candle fell upon it, I started in astonishment. It was that of Constance Bourmont, whom I had left among the hills of Westchester. The disguise had for the moment concealed her identity, but the clear-cut features, the hazel eyes and open brow were those of Madame Bourmont's eldest daughter.

Misjudging my gesture of surprise, a blush of shame arose to the pale cheeks of the girl.

"Sir," she murmured, "have I then done wrong, or forfeited your——"

Overcoming by an effort my amazement, I seized her hand.

"God forbid!" I cried, "yet—your mother? Mistress Josephine?"

The clasp of her fingers tightened upon my own.

"They would have forbidden me," said she simply, "'twas unmaidenly, but he is sorely wounded, and I thought to overtake you before you reached the——"

Her words, in which I read an appeal to my generosity, touched my heart.

"Was it to seek your brother you followed us?" I asked gently. "Had you told me before I left Bourmont House, a word to your worthy mother might have——"

She shook her head demurely and replied: "Nay, my mother sees in me but a child, I——"

"'Tis to such children the Colonies will owe their liberty," sounded the voice of the ranger, who, having bound the Major had approached us

unperceived. "M. de Marc, such things are perhaps unknown in France, but in America even the women overcome their fears when duty is made plain to them."

A wave of emotion crossed the girl's face, for the eyes of the soldier were fixed on her with approval. "Maybe it was a foolish thing," he continued, "and beyond the line of duty to your mother, that you should thus expose yourself to danger in following us; but 'twas ever the nature of Captain Bourmont to little count cost, and if his daughter's spirit is of the same caliber, 'tis an ill thing to oppose it."

"But," said I turning to Mistress Constance, "it is beyond my comprehension how you could know we were quartered at Red House."

A very simple tale the girl related to us, the ranger, the southerner and myself; the landlord at McDowell's request, had gone to the shed to make sure that the horses should be in readiness for our journey at the first streak of dawn. As for Major Brooks, he lay where Clark had left him, beneath the eaves of the tavern on the side farthest from the lane. Sorely shaken and bound with ropes, little was to be feared from his treachery, nor do I think that any thought of contest burned within him, for at heart he was a coward.

Constance Bourmont added to her tale nothing beyond the truth, nor sought to play the heroine.

Having seen us depart from her mother's house, she retired to her chamber to be alone, and at liberty to weep for her brother, who lay wounded, with no loving hand to minister to his necessities. Then the thought arose within her to follow and join us on the road, when there would be small

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likelihood of her purpose being thwarted. Yet, knowing well the temper of her mother, and that consent to so desperate an undertaking would scarce be forthcoming, she resolved to depart secretly, leaving a message which would explain her absence. She thought little of the hardships which might lie before her, though she knew much danger would possibly threaten a tender maid; but being skilled in horsemanship she hoped to overtake us before we had passed through Pennsylvania, so resolved to follow, trusting in a kind Providence to guard her.

While searching through her brother's wardrobe the thought presented itself, that, disguised as a man, her errand would be the easier. Having thus resolved upon her course, she awaited in much eagerness the proper hour to set out upon her journey. At dawn, on the morning following our departure from the homestead, the fearless girl, carrying a bundle which contained a cast-off suit of her brother's, sought the stable, when saddling with nervous fingers her favorite horse, she rode forth upon the highway leading to Tarrytown.

Being known to the Americans, she passed the pickets stationed at the ferry, and gained without hindrance the west shore of the Hudson. To proceed further was more difficult, and before she had ridden far upon the road which led to Tappan, the nature of her errand was demanded by a mounted guard. Fortune favored her; being taken before an officer he recognized her as a daughter of Madame Bourmont, and learning that she would ride to Philadelphia, obtained for her a pass, which removed all difficulties.

When she entered the country unfamiliar to her

she donned the man's attire, and though many whom she met looked hard upon her, she was unmolested. Stopping only at night, in such inns and farmhouses as came in her way, she met with no mishap, it not being an uncommon occurrence for a traveler to pass through this section which, though lying between the regions occupied by the armies, was for the time not troubled by either the soldiers of England or the Colonies.

Failing to overtake us she felt much disquietude, but having gone so far, resolved to push on to the Carolinas. Her coming to Red House at so unseasonable an hour happened through the gossip of a farmer's wife of whom she asked shelter. Inquiring as was her wont, if three horsemen had passed that day, the good woman replied in the affirmative, for it so chanced that we had obtained from her food for ourselves and horses.

Hoping to gain upon us if she lost no time, the intrepid girl resumed her saddle, till, being overcome with fatigue and the night far spent, she espied the light in Red House. Scarce believing that those she sought had halted there, she followed the lane and dismounted at the door. Upon knocking it was opened by Major Brooks, who scanned her narrowly. Seeing the Colonial uniform her spirits revived, and the courteous offer of the officer to stable her horse dispelled her fears.

Her feeling of security was soon rudely broken, for after returning to the room, the man soon penetrated her disguise, and was not slow in seeking to take advantage of her helplessness. During the conversation which followed Clark and McDowell were awakened, and had crept to the

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opening in the loft, when I also was aroused from my heavy slumber.

I marveled much at the daring of a maid, who, with the hope of serving a wounded brother, would set forth cheerfully, alone, risking the dangers and hardships unavoidable in an unsettled country. Clark and the Carolinian were full of admiration for her daring, and we arranged that Mistress Constance should accompany us to the American headquarters, which we hoped to reach ere another nightfall.

At early dawn we were in our saddles, and, having left it to the discretion of the landlord whether to free the Major or shoot him through the head, our little cavalcade proceeded southward with all the speed possible.

CHAPTER VI.

WARRIORS OF THE WILDERNESS.

By midday we had ridden well toward the boundary line between the Carolinas, and overtaken a detachment of countrymen making their way south on foot. Hearing our galloping hoofs, they drew up across the road as though to obstruct our passage. McDowell scrutinized them closely, then rode forward to the one he perceived was leader, leaving us on the highway.

As he approached, many among them raised their rifles threateningly, but as he drew nearer, and his face could be recognized, there was a shout, and half a score of the fellows ran forward as though to seize him. I would have advanced, for he seemed to be in danger, but Clark, noting my purpose, bade me remain.

"They are friends," said he, "and McDowell is known to them. Wait, he will return with information."

It was even so. For some moments the Carolinian sat upon his motionless horse, in the midst of the gesticulating men, then, accompanied by several, rode slowly back to us.

"Comrades," said he, "if our ride had been in an easterly direction, we should now have been prisoners; Cornwallis is at Charlotte, and yet nearer are some thousand of the enemy under Major Ferguson, of the King's regulars."

"And the Americans?" asked I, "are they not then in the neighborhood?"

A shadow crossed the face of the Carolinian. "Camden has scattered our forces," said he, "so that scarce five hundred fighting men remain together. Yet many have gathered to-day to oppose this Ferguson, who, having plundered peaceful farmers, has pushed northward to rejoin Cornwallis."

"He is now at King's Mountain!" cried one of the irregulars, "a thousand mounted men will attack him ere sunset, and many on foot are hastening to join them."

"Then," cried Clark, "there will be a battle——"

"That there will," replied McDowell, "for the temper of the people is roused. King's Mountain lies some fifteen miles to the north and east. Last night many mounted men under Campbell, Shelby, Williams and others, left the Cowpens, and are now moving eastward; there will be fighting, I warrant."

"And, gentlemen!" cried the leader of the countrymen, "by riding with all haste toward the river, you will come upon them before they reach the enemy."

Clark and McDowell exchanged rapid glances which I comprehended, nor did it require words to tell what was in their minds.

"In less than two hours we might reach them," said the Carolinian, "but if M. de Marc——"

"Nay," cried I, "'twould be but scant courtesy to detain you, and I also would fain strike a blow at these Englishmen."

A murmur of approval arose from the countrymen. "They are thieves and murderers?" cried

one, "fit only for the hangman, and must be overcome."

Perceiving McDowell hesitate, Constance Bourmont rode to his side.

"Sir," said she, "I see plainly if it were not for my presence, you would hasten to join your countrymen. Go, I pray you, for these,"—and she pointed to the irregulars,—"are loyal Americans, and will protect me."

Upon hearing her words, those on foot stared in amazement, for until that moment none had noted that a woman rode with us.

"The country is most unsettled," said McDowell soberly, "and if the British be victorious, there will be little safety anywhere. The maid speaks wisely; these are sons of Carolina, and will protect a woman."

"Go!" cried I, "Mistress Bourmont and I will follow in company with the—"

The girl lifted her head proudly. "M. de Marc," said she, fixing her eyes upon me, "you but just spoke of striking at the enemies of my country. 'Tis now the duty of every man who wields a sword to hasten to the support of those who are marching upon King's Mountain. Go with your companions; these will protect me."

"That we will," cried the leader, "even as our own wives and children. The British are in front of us, therefore there is little danger."

I shook my head; it seemed an ill thing to leave the girl.

Seeing me still hesitate she cried: "If you do not go, I shall never cease to regret that through me six strong arms remained in idleness, when stout blows were needed."

"The maid is right," said Clark, casting upon

her a look of admiration, "nor will any danger come to her that our presence could avert. Here she is safe."

With much reluctance I trusted to the judgment of my companions and consented to leave her. A shout of approval arose from the irregulars.

"We can scarcely reach the vicinity of the mountain before nightfall," said the leader, "and the battle will then be over. If the British are beaten, all will be well, but if the contrary happens, we will retreat to Chester, and await your coming."

The matter being thus decided, McDowell drew the man aside.

"I have told him the mission of Mistress Bourmont," said he, upon returning to us, "and it will but add to her safety. Certain ones wounded at Camden are in the vicinity of Chester, but her brother lies some twenty miles to the southward. To-morrow we may take her there."

With some misgiving I bade the girl adieu, and followed my companions, who had turned their faces toward King's Mountain. As I joined them we put our horses to the gallop and clattered down the road. A cheer followed us. Turning in the saddle, I saw the countrymen drawn up about Mistress Bourmont, into whose hand the leader had thrust a sword hilt.

Unfamiliar with the progress of the war in the south, and desirous of learning something concerning the enemy, whom, perhaps, I should soon meet in battle, I kept my horse apace with that of the Carolinian, and questioned him upon the matter. He replied readily, and as he had been absent from the region through which we rode

only a fortnight, was well able to satisfy my curiosity.

Having crushed the Americans at Camden, Lord Cornwallis rested upon his arms, feeling sure that the cause of the Colonies was lost in the south. But although the main body of the English remained inactive for a time, it was the plan of the commander to despatch to various sections of the Carolinas certain bodies of royal cavalry, that the country folk might feel the authority of the Crown, and those disorganized Americans who still clung together be dispersed. For the accomplishment of this errand, Major Patrick Ferguson, a zealous adherent to the royal arms, was appointed, with a light corps of regular infantry and a body of the royal militia, to scour the territory lying to the north of Camden. At the same time Lord Cornwallis broke his encampment, proceeded northward, making his quarters at Charlotte, and awaited the return of Ferguson.

The region embraced in the Carolinas was a country wild and rugged ; covered with thick woods, cut up by water-courses, abounding in swamps and morasses, crossed by roads and indirect crooked paths. To cut loose from the main army and penetrate this wilderness with a handful of men appeared a deed of recklessness on the part of the English major. The Americans were, however, scattered and disheartened ; it was harvest time, and there would be found abundant food for men and horses. Ferguson purposed to scour the mountain country, after which, having terrified the defeated enemy and gathered to his standard those loyal to the British Crown, he would unite with Cornwallis at Charlotte.

These facts had become known to McDowell before he left for the north with the message to Bourmont House. What he further told me was learned from the leader of the irregulars, to whose care we had intrusted Mistress Constance.

Through the first days of his expedition all had gone well with the doughty Englishman. None opposed him, and having struck terror and dismay into the hearts of the country folk, he prepared to rejoin the main army in North Carolina.

But suddenly, as though springing from the earth itself, appeared bands of men who contested his passage. The marauds of the English had roused a spirit of retaliation in the breasts of the adventurous dwellers in the mountain fastnesses to which they had penetrated. The inhabitants of the Carolinas and adjoining territories of Kentucky, Virginia and Georgia, were a people not given to witnessing the destruction of homes and property without a blow struck in revenge. These "mountain men," bred from their cradles to resist the inroads of hostile savages, were prompt to seize their weapons. A hardy race, half farmers, half huntsmen of the wilderness, there was naught to detain them, when swift messengers riding among the settlements sounded the call to arms. Unincumbered by baggage or artillery, provided with rifle, hunting knife and horses, but little time elapsed ere, singly, or by twos and threes, they hastened to a common rendezvous, anxious to strike a blow at the invaders of their territory. Clad for the most part like McDowell, in hunting shirt, leggings and border garments, mounted upon swift horses, experienced in the use of the rifle and hardened to fatigue, they constituted an array which might

well be feared by even the trained veterans of England.

Such was the enemy which arose in the path of Major Ferguson, his eleven hundred regulars and Tory militia. Aroused to a sense of his danger, the English commander pushed with all speed toward Charlotte, which lay many miles away—and as he proceeded there was a change in the nature of the conflict.

Hitherto the British had burned, pillaged and murdered with no opposition. Now English blood began to flow; even women rushed to arms. People dwelling in the forest gloom came out of their wilderness, blocked the roads, seized provisions and couriers, hovered upon the flanks of the red-coats harassing the retreating soldiers by night and by day. Stormy and restive spirits lurked in every thicket. The rear-guards, whenever they looked behind, saw horsemen afar off, but as the troops halted and waited to receive them, they vanished—to appear again in unexpected places. The country was roused, and the English, with thoughts only of safety, were hurrying toward Charlotte.

Upon the morning when we fell in with the company of irregulars hastening toward the border of North Carolina, Ferguson had crossed the line, hotly followed by a force of mountaineers exceeding in numbers his own. It was to join these that we rode northward.

McDowell explained to us, that having left the Cowpens the night before, a hamlet consisting of a few log cabins, the Americans must be near the border, and that we were quite sure to come upon them before they reached King's Mountain, where it was reported the English had made a

stand. Being well mounted we pushed forward rapidly, and very soon found traces of those we sought.

"Another hour," said McDowell, touching his horse with the spur, "and we will reach them. They can scarce begin the battle before we shall be able to take part in it."

"But," ventured I, "without bayonets how can your countrymen attack an enemy well fortified, and—"

A fleeting smile crossed the features of the mountaineer.

"Our manner of warfare is unknown to you, M. de Marc," replied he, "bayonets have we none, but there are other means whereby these red-coats may be overcome. Perhaps it will be made clear to you."

Rather amazed at so unusual a mode of warfare, I replied nothing, but followed my companions, somewhat doubting.

CHAPTER VII.

KING'S MOUNTAIN.

FOR another half hour we pushed on rapidly, noting on every side signs betraying the recent passage of a considerable force of mounted men. Close to the North Carolina border, McDowell, who was riding a little in advance, espied a solitary figure seated beside the highway, who, as we approached, sprang to his feet and turned toward us the muzzle of a rifle.

"What now?" cried the Carolinian, pulling up his steed and motioning to the other that we were friends. "I thought all loyal men were hastening to King's Mountain. Have the British then——"

"Such was my purpose," growled the stranger, still threatening us with his weapon, "but yonder lies the beast which would have carried me forward, and on foot a man can scarce reach the place before nightfall."

"Then," said Clark, "you are one who would strike a blow at Ferguson. Is it long since they passed?"

"Perhaps half an hour," replied the man. "If you are not for the red-coats, hasten forward. 'Twas in my mind to seize the horses, but if for the Colonies, pass on in safety!"

"And would one man seek to contend against three horsemen?" I whispered in Clark's ear.

"One would have received a rifle-ball," replied he, "and the man is armed with a pistol also."

"Come!" cried McDowell, "'tis five miles to the mountain and we must make haste."

Leaving the dismounted soldier standing most disconsolately beside the roadway, we galloped off, not sparing spurs, for we hoped to come upon the mountain-men before they attacked the enemy.

I knew not the feeling which stirred my two companions, but *my* blood tingled, and I was full of excitement at the prospect of a battle with the English. As yet, my experience of war was limited to the skirmish beside the Bourmont home-stead, and the smell of powder was new to me. Though not openly an adherent of the Americans, I had, through force of circumstance, been drawn into the conflict against the British Crown, and it was my purpose to acquit myself as became a soldier and a Frenchman. At the moment I forgot my errand, also the consequences which might follow did I fall, or should I be taken prisoner by the enemy. The zeal of my companions regarding the approaching battle communicated itself to me—all else seemed of secondary importance.

Having ridden perhaps twenty furlongs, and turned a bend in the road, we came suddenly upon a large concourse of men and horses blocking the way, and from among them arose the murmur of voices, the clatter of steel, and such disorder as follows the gathering of troops who have not yet learned the discipline of war.

As we approached, the cavalcade had halted; some were sitting quietly in the saddle, others

having dismounted, talked together with much animation. Those nearest, as they saw us advance, faced about, some demanding gruffly who we were, and what was our business in the vicinity of King's Mountain.

"As to that," replied McDowell, "you should know full well, Lieutenant Peters: 'tis not the habit of James McDowell to be challenged by loyal Americans."

The other laughed good-naturedly. "Faith!" cried he, "our acquaintance was of short duration, and the affair at Camden interrupted it so rudely that I scarce recognized you. You have come in good time; within the hour we move against yon hirelings."

"Who are your leaders?" asked the Carolinian, casting his eyes over the mounted troopers.

"There are many," replied the lieutenant, "for our force has been gathered from all sections. Colonel Campbell from Virginia, Shelby, Sevier, Cleveland, and your brother, Colonel McDowell, from the Carolinas. There is also Williams, with four hundred riflemen of your own district."

"And the red-coats?"

"Are yonder," replied the other, pointing in the direction of the mountain. "They hold a strong position, but we will dislodge them."

A movement among one of the groups which had dismounted arrested further conversation. A tall officer, clad in the buff and blue of the Continentals, approached us. 'Twas Colonel McDowell, who, having perceived his brother, hastened to greet him.

"We move at once," said he, "each force under its own leader, though Colonel Campbell

has been chosen as commander. You will take part with us?"

"Both Sergeant Clark and M. de Marc have accompanied me hitherto for that purpose," replied the Carolinian.

"The British are strongly intrenched," said his brother, "but it matters little. I would like you to march with my division; to M. de Marc I can promise a hot conflict. The red-coats are driven into a corner and our men seek vengeance."

The American forces were already in motion; King's Mountain lay but three miles distant, and the soldiers were eager to attack the English. Following McDowell's guidance, Clark and I joined the eight score hardy mountaineers who constituted his brother's command. I noted that in dress and figure they much resembled our companion; each was armed with a rifle of unusual length, a hunting knife, and a few carried pistols.

As we drew nearer to the scene of the prospective conflict, the mountain whereupon was stationed the enemy loomed up before us. Rising out of a broken country, separated from the neighboring heights by a deep valley, it resembled an insulated promontory covered with lofty trees, free from underbrush and interspersed with boulders and ridges of gray rock. It was indeed a strong position, and being without bayonets I feared the Americans had little show of success in attacking the well armed and trained veterans of Major Ferguson.

After passing over about two miles of ground, and the opposing force but another beyond us, Colonel Campbell, who rode in advance with his four hundred Virginians, halted the cavalcade.

All about the woods grew thick, hiding us from the eyes of the English, but through openings I could see the glitter of arms upon the level ridge which formed the crest of the mountain, and the bright color of the enemy's uniforms shone among the green of the foliage.

"Yonder are the red-coats," said Clark, pointing with his rifle at the moving patches of crimson, "the battle is about to begin."

The air was clear, and the crest of the mountain looked but a few hundred yards distant. Toward the summit the trees grew more sparsely, leaving an opening about which were scattered the enemy's soldiers formed in two lines, and resting carelessly upon their arms. Upon the highest crest floated the Cross of St. George, and beneath it I could see a patch of white, which Colonel McDowell said was the horse of Major Ferguson. Taking out my watch I saw that the hour hand marked three o'clock.

Just then there was a sudden movement on the part of the Americans. Each man slipped from his saddle and tied his horse to a tree or bit of underbrush. Colonels Campbell, Williams and Cleveland were the last to dismount, for, riding among the men, they directed the arrangement of positions.

The mountaineers formed in three divisions, each with rifle in hand, and knife or pistol ready - a few beside the officers carried swords, and I saw an ax or two, for men of all conditions had joined the expedition. As I stood beside my horse gazing upon the scene with much curiosity, Colonel McDowell approached.

"I warrant," said he, "that our mountain warfare is not familiar to M. de Marc, and that

the force here gathered, presents to the eye of one accustomed to look upon the regulars of France, a poor showing."

I made a gesture of dissent.

"Nay," said he, smiling, "the ways of my countrymen are rude, and perhaps strange to a foreigner, but they are brave, and will attack yon British hirelings with small thought of fear."

"But without bayonets!" ventured I, "how can you expect to overcome the enemy?"

"It was done," replied he, "at Bennington; Stark drove the red-coats from their intrenchment with clubs and rifles. You perceive that our force is formed in three divisions. We will storm the heights from as may sides. Campbell and Shelby will lead the center, Cleveland and Williams the left, while Sevier and I will advance upon the right, past yonder grove of pines;" he pointed with his sword to a cluster of giant trees half-way up the mountain side.

"I propose to advance with you," said I; "there must be a place for me among the men."

He pondered for a moment, turning an inquiring glance upon Clark, who stood somewhat behind me, leaning upon his rifle.

"It would be better," said he, "for M. de Marc to remain in the rear." Then, as he saw my brow redden: "It is no question of courage, but our style of fighting is unfamiliar to you. The men will advance with caution, keeping well behind the rocks and trees; if you appear in the open, a dozen British muskets would mark you for a target."

Clark nodded grimly. "'Tis kindly advice," said he, "and M. de Marc has but to follow the manner of the mountaineers. I warrant oppor-

tunity will arise to strike a blow at these Britishers."

Despite my momentary anger at the Colonel's suggestion, I perceived clearly the wisdom of his advice, yet I resolved to follow the Carolinians and take part in the battle.

The soldiers were now ready for the attack. The right and left divisions moved off through the forest, that they might reach their positions upon the enemy's flank before the central force, under Campbell and Shelby, should advance toward the Englishmen. Following Colonel McDowell's suggestion I remained beside my horse, from whence I could see the whole side of the mountain, and watch the progress of the flanking parties when they should come out upon the ridge.

For an hour I awaited breathlessly the signal which would tell the commander that the right and left divisions had gained their positions, and were moving up the mountain-side. It came; a report, followed by a puff of white smoke which arose above the foliage to my left. Looking again at my watch I saw it was four o'clock.

"'Tis the fire of a British picket," said a mountaineer at my elbow, "the advance of Williams has been discovered."

It was true. Far up the mountain there was a commotion among the red-coated troops, and the muffled roll of a drum reached my ear.

At the report of the picket's musket, the Americans around me were in motion. Led by their officers, the divisions moved forward at a brisk run toward the base of the incline, on the summit of which the enemy awaited them. Resolved not to remain a spectator only, to the stirring

scenes which were being enacted about me, I followed the rear of the attacking column, pushing with it up the gentle slope of the mountain. I was armed but with sword and pistols, so there was little chance for me to engage the enemy if we came not to close quarters. But the fever of battle was upon me, and to remain behind was to my mind a disgrace to the name of France.

For a quarter of a mile the mountaineers advanced rapidly, the combatants not being yet within rifle distance. Looking upward through the openings between the trees, I saw the red-coated line standing in battle array. From our left and right came sharp reports ; the flash of fire amid the foliage, and puffs of smoke increasing as the discharges from the rifles of Williams' and McDowell's men became more frequent. They had come within range of the enemy, and I saw half a score of the British fall, killed or wounded. Suddenly a burst of flame covered the front of the red-coated line ; 'twas followed by defiant shouts on the part of the Americans.

The column of which I was a part drew nearer to the summit ; a soldier in front of me raised his firearm, took careful aim, and at the flash I saw one of the enemy tumble headlong. We were within rifle range ; the battle had begun in earnest. The example of the mountaineer was followed by many others ; no one waited the order to fire ; each was his own master and commander. On every side rifles cracked incessantly, and for the first time I witnessed the manner of fighting in the wilderness. Upon reaching a point half-way up the mountain, the column broke as if by magic its formation, each man seeking a tree or other shelter, from behind which he fired

at the enemy. From tree to tree they darted, advancing steadily, but seldom exposing their persons to the aim of the British regulars.

We had in this manner reached a narrow ledge of rock which separated us from the more open ground in front of the enemy's line, when I felt my shoulder seized by a powerful hand, and was forced downward upon my knees. At the same instant a crashing volley from the summit sent a shower of bullets over me. The mountaineer, who had thus opportunely saved me from instant death, or a serious wound, laughed hoarsely.

"Stranger," said he, "would you set yourself up as a mark for those above? With trees in plenty there is small need to expose oneself so recklessly."

I would have replied, but a scattering of shots from the British drove my rescuer to shelter, nor did I hesitate to follow his example. I saw him no more, and whether he was killed or forgot the incident, I know not.

The enemy having fired upon our forces without avail, a short lull followed the conflict, save for the sharp crack of the American rifles. As I stood behind a tree looking upward, I perceived that Major Ferguson had resolved to force the assailants from the mountain-side. Suddenly the red line with leveled bayonets were rushing upon us, driving all before them. Those about me discharged their rifles at the advancing regulars, but the gleam of the steel and the determination of those who held it were more than a match for the poorly armed raw troops. On all sides the mountaineers fled down the slope, and I thought the battle lost, when the forces of Williams and

McDowell turned the tide of victory. Posted as they were on the flanks of the advancing line, sheltered by rocks and trees, deadly shots with the rifle, they poured a storm of lead into the exultant Englishmen which threw their formation into confusion.

Ferguson, beside himself with rage that a handful of countrymen should hold in check his trained veterans, ordered them to fall upon those who occupied his flanks. In turn each flanking party was driven, but those who had before retreated returned to the fight with renewed energy. The British were surrounded on three sides ; the forest rung with the crack of hidden rifles fired by unseen foes. Men were falling in the red-coated ranks ; I saw an officer, the foremost in a charge, stagger backward, then roll over and over down the slope, clutching at the ground in his agony. More followed ; soldiers fell by tens, leaving wide gaps in the wavering ranks, but behind their trees the riflemen were safe from harm.

I was astounded at the hardihood and bravery of my companions ; fleeing before the bayonets, they turned suddenly, and like wolves when scattered, returning to the attack in twos and threes, they fell upon the British when least expected.

Ferguson on his white horse seemed everywhere, but he saw the battle was against him. As I crouched behind a tree watching the man in much excitement, the voice of Clark sounded in my ear.

“ He is brave,” said he, “ but deprived of their leader the red-coats will speedily surrender. Lower, M. de Marc, your hat hides the fellow’s heart ! ”

Turning, I saw the ranger level his rifle, holding it with a steadiness which made man and weapon as one. With deliberation he ran his eye along the barrel, a jet of flame leaped from the muzzle, and—the white horse had lost its rider.

Clark dropped the butt of his rifle to the ground. “ ‘Twas a fair shot and the red-coat was a likely mark. He will trouble the Colonies no more.”

Upon the fall of the English commander a shout of triumph arose from the Americans. The red line wavered, then, breaking in confusion, fled up the mountain. Clark coolly reloaded his rifle.

“ You have seen,” said he, “ the temper of the Carolinas ; the battle will soon be over.”

Turning my eyes toward the summit I could see that the enemy’s formation was hopelessly broken. The regulars, in their scarlet uniforms, and the Tories, some in citizens’ garb, were huddled together seeking to shelter themselves from the still deadly fire of the victorious mountaineers.

“ It has become a slaughter,” cried I, turning to Clark and the half score of Americans who were gathered about me. “ Can the firing not cease ? ”

One of the mountaineers laughed harshly. “ Fight they not so in France ? ” said he ; “ if the red-coats would save their skins let them surrender ; till then—” he raised his rifle, sending a bullet into the confused mass above.

He who had succeeded Major Ferguson saw, indeed, that to resist longer would be sheer madness. The report of the mountaineer’s rifle had scarce died away, when a white flag appeared

above the enemy, and as though by magic the fire of the Americans ceased.

With the others, I hurried to the summit where stood the defeated and crestfallen Englishmen. Each had thrown down his arms ; eight hundred prisoners at the mercy of the fierce warriors of the wilderness.

McDowell, who, during the battle, I had not seen, approached in company with his brother and Colonel Campbell. Upon seeing me his face brightened.

"We have beaten the red-coats," said he. "Camden is partly avenged."

A movement among the mountaineers attracted my attention. Certain of the Carolinians had surrounded a half score of the prisoners and approached the officers.

"They are Tories, thieves and murderers," Colonel McDowell whispered in my ear, "and 'tis the purpose of my countrymen to avenge the slaughter of their wives and children."

Aghast at his words I could reply nothing, but listened to the leader of those who guarded the prisoners.

"These are not Englishmen," said he, "but ruffians, against whom every honest hand is turned. Protected by the arms of King George, they have despoiled our homes, ravished our wives and daughters, and slain boys and old men ; we demand but justice, they having fallen into our hands."

Of what followed little can be said. It seemed but just that those who by their acts had placed themselves beyond the pale of mercy, should meet their fate at the hands of the ones whose wives and children they had destroyed. Be-

fore the mountaineers left the vicinity of King's Mountain the ten Tories were hanged to a giant tree ; the remaining prisoners were unharmed.

After gaining so great a victory the riflemen departed to their homes, with little fear that Lord Cornwallis would venture forth from Charlotte into South Carolina.

The battle of King's Monntain being over, and the British so rudely handled, I set out with my two companions for the south, where Constance Bourmont and her escort of countrymen awaited us.

CHAPTER VIII.

HOW THREE CAME TO CHESTER.

THE woodland was black with shadows, when, fatigued by many hours in the saddle, I found myself on the outskirts of the town of Chester. My companions rode in silence, each intent upon his own thoughts. Constance Bourmont was not with us, and it was this which set a look of sternness upon the faces of the Americans, and filled my heart with dark forebodings. Where the maid might be we knew not, yet comprehended well that danger threatened her, and from a source which even the keen mind of the Carolinian had not foreseen. Thrice I saw him press his lips together and knit his brows, as though seeking to solve a problem which eluded him ; as to Clark, he rode with downcast eyes, his rifle resting idly across the saddle, and his tall form swaying with the motion of his animal.

The calamity which had befallen us came suddenly. Having ridden in haste from King's Mountain on the morning following the battle, we reached the company of irregulars halted in a little hamlet some miles from the scene of conflict. Upon perceiving me, the leader seemed much astonished and asked how, having been but a few hours before in the south, I had ridden from the north in company with the two Americans.

"What ill-timed jesting is this?" asked McDowell sharply. "M. de Marc was present at the battle. It was but this morning we left King's Mountain."

A look of perplexity crossed the face of the irregular. "Of that I know not," said he, "but his messenger came from the south, bidding the maid—"

"Mistress Bourmont!" cried I, "is she then not with you?"

The countryman shook his head. "It is some six hours," replied he, "since she rode away, being of a mind to reach her brother's side."

Clark and McDowell exchanged glances.

"What messenger?" demanded the latter sternly. "M. de Marc has sent none."

The leader of the irregulars stared stupidly.

"Come!" cried McDowell in a voice of authority, "where has the maid gone, and with whom?"

"To the wounded near Camden," replied the man, "a messenger came to us from the south."

"And what said he?" asked Clark.

"That one Captain Bourmont was sore stricken and the Frenchman who had hastened to his side wished the maid to accompany his messenger without delay, or she might not again see her brother alive."

I would have cried out, so great was my astonishment, but McDowell forestalled me.

"How did this man look?" asked he sharply, "did he show a letter?"

"Not so," replied the other, "he was a countryman of whom I have some remembrance, having met him at Red House; he dwells close by the tavern."

An oath fell from the Carolinian's lips. " "Twas a trick ! " cried he ; " the girl has been lured away."

Perchance astonishment had dulled my wits, for a full understanding of the matter did not at once come to me ; not so with Clark.

" "Tis the knave we left at Red House," said he. " While lying bound without the tavern he heard our conversation and the errand of Mistress Bourmont to the Carolinas."

The truth flashed upon me. Major Brooks, feigning unconsciousness, had listened to the story of Mistress Bourmont, and his quick wit hit upon a plan whereby he might avenge the insults heaped upon him by my companions. He doubtless saw us ride away leaving him to the mercy of the landlord, and when released, devised a plan which ill-fortune favored. Perhaps Captain Bourmont may have been known to him ; if so his task was but the easier. Following us, he knew of our departure for King's Mountain, and that the girl was guarded by those whose wits were not as sharp as their loyalty to the cause. Mistress Bourmont was a woman, and the knowledge of her brother's needs would remove any scruples which might arise in her mind.

I had trusted the American officer but little, and thought I perceived there lay within him a certain craftiness which is often given to evil minds, and when turned to account, furthers the ends of its possessor. It required small perception to follow the plan which had thrown me into despair. With the knowledge of Mistress Constance's errand in the south, Major Brooks seized upon our absence to lure the unsuspecting girl into his power. I doubted not, that having sent

his hireling to the camp of the irregulars, he lay in wait beside the highway, when, she being delivered over to him, he might revenge himself, both upon her and those who had overcome him at the inn. The thought filled me with keenest anguish, nor were my companions less moved by the danger which surrounded her whom we had promised to protect.

Upon the faces of the Americans rage succeeded the shadow of anxiety. The bronze of the ranger's complexion changed to a dull red, and the lines about his mouth hardened.

"Sir," said he, turning to McDowell, "let us go quickly; the maid has need of us, and it ill-befits our manhood that this traitor see another sunset. The country is familiar to you, therefore—"

The Carolinian withdrew his eyes from contemplation of the roadway. "'Tis even so," said he shortly, "but we have maybe many miles to travel before we find her. If M. de Marc—"

"Forward!" cried I, "we have tarried too long already; if we can but find the maid—"

"That we will," interrupted McDowell sternly, "even though it be within the British lines."

The words, simple but so decided, raised my drooping hopes, the more so that actions proclaimed his earnestness. Gathering from the leader of the irregulars such knowledge as he possessed, the direction taken by Mistress Bourmont, a description of her escort, and the time which had elapsed since they departed, he put spurs to his horse and galloped southward.

It was thus we rode into Chester early in the evening and drew rein before the door of the tavern to which McDowell led us. Weary and

heavy-hearted I alighted from the saddle, scarce noticing the bustling landlord, or the curious faces of the score of countrymen, who, aroused by our coming, hastened to surround us.

"We will pass the night here," said McDowell; "perhaps some news may come to us of those we seek. The country is not so large that three horsemen, and one a woman, should ride unobserved."

"But if they came not to Chester?" I ventured.

"As to that," replied the Carolinian, "we shall learn presently; men and beasts are now weary, and without rest we can accomplish little."

Just then he ceased abruptly, to return the greeting of one who, pushing his way through the crowd, advanced with much show of welcome. I noted that the countrymen treated the newcomer with much respect, drawing aside for him to pass, and whispering to each other earnestly.

Who the man was, of course, I knew not, and little in his appearance warranted their actions. Beside McDowell, who, having dismounted, greeted him courteously, the stranger seemed a person of small consequence. Of slight stature, quiet demeanor and a face of much gentleness, he might have been taken for a peaceful farmer of the neighborhood, had it not been for his uniform. Yet there was that in his countenance, the expression of his thin lips, and a restlessness of the eyes, which told of something more than ordinary lying behind the calm exterior.

Returning McDowell's greeting he cast a keen glance upon me, for my dress was not familiar in the Carolinas. McDowell hastened to explain.

" 'Tis M. de Marc," said he, " whom General Lafayette has—"

At mention of my countryman a look of pleasure crossed the features of the stranger.

" It is a name dear to each American heart," said he, courteously extending his hand; " we can offer scant hospitality in Chester, for Cornwallis has stripped the country, but to such as remains, a friend of Lafayette is doubly welcome."

Pleased at so cordial a greeting from a stranger, I would have replied, but his attention being drawn for the moment by the Carolinian, I inquired of a countryman the name of the officer who had so honored me.

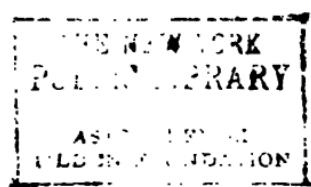
" 'Tis General Marion," replied he, " there is no braver man throughout the Carolinas."

I did not then know the reputation of the soldier who stood before me, but later learned the worth of him whom the English styled the " Swamp Fox." Brave, but never rashly seeking danger, careful of the lives of his men as he was careless of his own in battle, he was the idol of his soldiers and the south.

Awaiting some action on the part of McDowell, I was joined by Clark, who, having remained in the saddle, had been a silent witness to the conference between Marion and the Carolinian.

Suddenly the former turned and saluted us. " Gentlemen," said he, " certain business demands immediate attention, otherwise I would join you in the tavern; before long I hope to do myself that honor." So saying he disappeared among the countrymen, leaving us to follow McDowell into the dwelling.

" Fortune favors us," said he. " Marion has





“OFTEN ONLY A HANDFUL OF TROOPERS RODE WITH HIM.” P.

promised to lend what aid he can, though more pressing duties have drawn him to Chester."

"Then you told him ;" ventured I.

"But a word," replied the Carolinian, "he wishes to learn more of the matter ; if this Major Brooks remains in the Carolinas, Marion will find him."

Our conversation was interrupted by the entrance of a servant, who spread before us such provisions as the house afforded, nor did it seem that the sharp eyes of the British foragers could have found the larder of the worthy landlord.

During the meal I inquired of McDowell concerning General Marion. In common with the men of the south he cherished feelings of enthusiasm and trust for that officer.

"I little thought to find him here," said he, "for it is his habit to hover on the flank of the enemy, so that his name has become to Cornwallis an ill-omen."

"And," I asked, "are you of his squadron ?"

A smile flitted across the face of the Carolinian. "It is my fortune to serve under him," replied he, "but as to squadrons ; the resources of the south are few, and our forces widely scattered. With a squadron Marion would drive the British into the sea."

Seeing that I knew little of the matter, he went on to speak of the force of Marion being but too small. At times numbering scarce three score men, then, one nightfall would find a hundred hardy troopers under his command, another see them gone, only a handful remaining to ride with him against the British.

I was wondering how a general could do battle with scarce a corporal's guard to follow him,

when a clatter without announced an arrival, and the landlord swinging wide the door made way that Marion himself might enter.

Crossing to the table he joined us without ceremony, inquired how we fared, and if we had recovered from our tiresome ride.

"The country is somewhat rough," said he, turning to me, "and holds little comfort for a stranger. In France, M. de Marc, such hardships are unknown."

"Sir," said I, with a feeling that he thought me ill-fitted for rude warfare, "the soldiers of France are taught to——"

"Nay," replied he with a grave smile, "far be it from me to underrate the hardiness of a French soldier; they have befriended us in the hour of our need." Then: "But of your errand to the Carolinas, McDowell says you seek a wounded officer—Captain Bourmont."

"It was in part my purpose," replied I, "but another matter has arisen; Mistress Bourmont——"

He tapped for a moment upon the table. "Of that I have also heard something," said he; "the maid has not been in Chester."

"Sir," said Clark with much earnestness, "do you know anything of this Major Brooks?"

The General thought for a moment. "His name is not familiar to me," replied he, "but some one in my command may know concerning him. If you will tell me plainly all circumstances relating to Mistress Bourmont, I may be able to assist you."

He remained with eyes cast down, one hand toying idly with a knife upon the table, while Clark and the Carolinian related the incidents of

the past two days. As they concluded he nodded gravely.

"The maid has been carried away," said he, "yet there are some who have seen her, it could scarce be otherwise. This Major Brooks, if indeed it is he who has taken her, would scarce venture toward Chester and the south, being sure that there you would search for him."

"But," cried I, overcome by anxiety, "we cannot tarry here, when she, who trusted to our care, lies in great danger. If we do not find her——"

The Americans, less demonstrative than the sons of France, sat quietly, and in their calmness I too grew less excited, though feeling compelled to cry out against the lawlessness of a region, where innocent women were liable to suffer from the unscrupulousness of any planning villain.

The unimpassioned voice of the Carolinian replied to my warm words.

"Whatever means lie within our power will be used to rescue Mistress Bourmont; yet, I think no great danger threatens her. If he whom we have reason to suspect has carried her away, he will not go far; the girl has spirit, and even here there is some check to lawlessness."

Of the three, Marion, being of more gentle stock than the others, comprehended better my feelings as a soldier and a man.

"I can understand," said he, and there was a note of sympathy in his voice, "that M. de Marc is deeply troubled at the misfortune fallen upon Mistress Bourmont; but I think it may not be as difficult a matter to find her as you fear. If she rode southward there are many in this neighborhood who would have seen her, but if a prisoner

to Major Brooks, there will be more likelihood of success if you turn to the north. At daybreak I will ride that way, my errand in Chester being accomplished, and it would be well for you to accompany me."

My companions nodded their approval, while I hastened to express my gratitude for his kindly offer.

"We of the south," replied he gravely, "are ever ready to succor the unfortunate, and Mistress Bourmont is a patriot."

He arose and extended his hand; McDowell accompanied him to the door, his huge figure towering a full head above that of his commander. Marion turned upon the threshold.

"Sir," said he, "we start at sunrise; a night's rest will relieve somewhat your anxiety, therefore I would advise you to at once seek repose."

CHAPTER IX.

THE CABIN IN THE FOREST.

THE war of the Colonies against the British Crown has long since ceased ; naught remains but history. During that time I had many adventures, and from them learned to more fully comprehend the courage and endurance of those whom we of the older world had been taught to place below our plane, associating them with the wilderness in which they dwelt, where the pomp and glitter of courts and kings were unknown, and where men left their plows to take up the sword for the cause they loved.

Above all, that which astonished me the most, was the braveness of the women of the Colonies ; among them Constance Bourmont was a unit, but of her I speak more freely, being an actor in the drama of which she was the central figure. There were others who passed through blood and fire for those most dear to them, but to their deeds I was a stranger, knowing naught of them save through report, and it was from living lips came the simple tale which is needed to explain what befell the maid, while I with my companions and General Marion sought to pierce the darkness caused by a mighty cloud of misfortune which enveloped us, and turned me for a time from the errand which had sent me to the Colonies.

With much misgiving, she received as she sup-

posed my message, and prepared to accompany the bearer of it to the vicinity of Camden, where her brother lay wounded. While she was unable to comprehend the reason that I, having ridden northward in company with Clark and the Carolinian, should have come so unexpectedly to Captain Bourmont, the knowledge that he was perhaps dying, and in order to see him alive once more there was need of haste, governed her action. She could learn but little from the countryman who had constituted himself her guide. The man was dull of wit, and to her questions replied briefly, or not at all ; he knew only, that it was his mission to accompany her to the south, that haste was necessary, for the route was long, and Chester must be reached before nightfall.

Bidding adieu to the irregulars she set out in company with her guide, upon the highway which led to the south where she supposed I was awaiting her.

Some few miles from the hamlet in which her late companions had made their camp, one of those many roads, which are to be found so frequently throughout the Carolinas, led at right angles from the main thoroughfare. Into this her guide turned, nor did she question him, as to her the country was not familiar, and the man knowing it, she could but trust him.

For half a league the way lay through the open country, a place of exceeding wilderness, with scarce a dwelling anywhere, nor sign of human habitation. Presently the ground became more broken ; from time to time groves appeared, small hills covered with straggling underbrush, wet swampy land flanked by reeds and rushes, and beyond, a forest.

As they approached it the girl pulled up her horse and said :

" We have left the main road far behind, and it leads to Chester ; why then have you led me hither ? "

" 'Tis shorter," replied the man sullenly, " and upon the highway we might fall in with those who would do us injury."

" The British are in the north," said she, " who, then, would trouble us ? "

" We go to Chester," replied he, " this is the quickest way."

Unwilling to be drawn into a discussion with so boorish a fellow, she answered nothing, and for a time followed the man in silence into the depths of the wood.

The gloominess of the place oppressed her and renewed the misgivings which had arisen in her mind at thought of accompanying the messenger alone. Had the distance not been so great, she would perhaps have refused to ride further, trusting to find the way back to her late companions, of whose good intentions she had no fear.

" Sir," said she, forcing a calmness she did not feel, " we have ridden many miles and need refreshment ; is there no inn——"

" But a mile further," replied the fellow, " we will tarry there for an hour ; beyond lies the open country."

Relieved by the prospect of reaching a human dwelling, and perhaps those of whom she might inquire the way, she urged forward her horse more briskly, till, coming suddenly to a turn in the path, there appeared a clearing in the forest, and in its center a square log cabin flanked by an outhouse.

Taking in at a glance the surroundings, she

noted with fresh apprehension, that beyond the cabin there appeared no opening among the trees. Except for the road over which they had come, the circle of the forest seemed unbroken ; beyond arose a dense wilderness thick with trees and underbrush. To add to her disquietude the dwelling showed no signs of life, nor did anything, either man or beast, show themselves at the approach of the horses.

In feigned amazement the countryman pulled up his nag, gazing with a look of much stupidity upon the silent structure, and the unbroken circle.

"Is there no one here?" asked his companion breathlessly.

"The place is silent," replied he, "they may be in the woods."

So saying, he drew a pistol from his belt and raising it above his head discharged the weapon in the air.

The report striking the fringe of trees sent back an echo, but no voice replied. Deep silence reigned amid the forest, broken only by the chirping of birds, or the crackling of a twig as some animal, alarmed by the shot, scurried away into the underbrush.

"Yonder is the inn," said the man gruffly, "but the landlord is absent ; he will return before night-fall. Let us enter, for, perhaps, food may remain upon the table."

"But I see no opening in the forest on the other side."

"A screen of leaves conceals it ; beyond lies the open country."

"Is it not strange sir, this being an inn, the landlord is absent?"

The man's brow darkened. "He will return

in time, I warrant." Then, more courteously : " 'Tis not many miles to Chester, let us eat and hasten forward."

Reassured by his words, the girl dismissed in part her fears, and, indeed, from whence arose cause for alarm ? If not sent by me as he had represented, who else could have known of her errand to the Carolinas, or that her brother lay wounded near Camden ? At these thoughts she felt easier, and, impatient to continue the journey, followed her guide across the clearing, and dismounted at the door of the cabin. It was open, exposing an interior of rude simplicity, the furniture consisting of a rough table, some chairs and an iron stove. Noting her glance of inquiry, her companion attempted an explanation.

" It is certainly a poor place," said he, " yet, there being few who dwell in the neighborhood, and not many passing through the forest, 'tis sufficient."

So saying he led the way into the dwelling ; having entered, Mistress Bourmont perceived that the room was provided also with two bunks, set against the wall and filled with straw.

" I see no food," said she, for the table, and a rude cupboard against the wall, were bare.

" Such things as the owner has collected are above," replied her companion, pointing to a ladder surmounted by an opening in the ceiling. " A ham or two, perchance bread and tea ; enough, with water from the spring."

Seating herself beside the table she watched him kindle a fire in the stove ; when he had finished he arose stiffly and said :

" The meal will soon be ready, but you go into the loft for such things as we need ; 'tis lighted

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by a window ; the spring is near the border of the wood and I will go for water."

Wishing to avoid delay the girl hastened to do his bidding. Reaching the top of the ladder she stopped, and called down to her companion :

"The place is dark, I cannot see——"

"The window is then barred," replied he, "wait by the opening, and I will attend to it."

She felt his feet upon the rounds of the ladder beneath her, and springing nimbly to the floor of the garret, drew back into the shadow that he might pass.

Suddenly there was a crash, the blackness became deeper, and she heard the sound of a bolt slipping against metal.

For a moment terror overcame her. Trembling in every limb she sought the opening to find it closed ; the heavy trap was lowered and she was a prisoner.

With a cry she fell upon her knees, seeking to raise the door with her tender hands, but it resisted all her efforts ; she was cut off from escape and left in total darkness. Then womanhood asserted itself ; with trembling voice she cried to him below to free her, offering as a reward such money as she carried, and more when she found her brother.

If her captor heard, he replied nothing ; the stillness grew oppressive ; she fancied herself deserted, left to perish in the forest, and overcome with terror, threw herself upon the rough boards sobbing piteously.

How long she remained thus she knew not ; the chirping of a bird without aroused her. By degrees calmness returned ; the man had not, as yet, sought to do her harm ; to reach her he must

thrust his head through the opening, and she had a pistol. The first despair had rendered her powerless, but now insulted maidenhood came to her aid. Why she had been so treacherously betrayed she could not understand ; he might have struck her down in the forest, but it had pleased him to make of her a prisoner. Lying there she sought to solve the riddle, and with each moment courage returned, the courage of despair ; a resolve to die if need be, but to defend her honor to the last.

Presently she arose and groped her way to the wall. Her head came in contact with the low, slanting roof ; the pain only served to strengthen her resolve. He had said there was a window, which if she could but reach, its light might lend her aid. Her feet crunched upon a mass of straw ; she crept forward, feeling her way, till, measuring the distance as well as possible, she realized she had passed quite around the chamber ; if there was a window it was higher up, or she had missed it.

Again, emboldened by the first attempt, she circled the loft. Looking upward, a tiny ray of light fell upon her face, a struggling sunbeam shining through a crack between the boards.

As this shaft from the sun pierced the darkness of her gloomy prison, so a ray of hope dispelled the yet deeper gloom about her heart. Reaching eagerly toward the light, she felt the board move ; the inclemency of the weather had loosened its fastenings, and it required but little effort to widen the crack yet further. Standing on tiptoe she pushed with her hands the loosened board, till gradually it gave way under her efforts, and the ray of light turned into a stream of sunshine.

Then she paused, for a thought struck her. Did she tear the board from its last fastening and send it crashing to the ground below, her jailer would discover that the bird was like to burst its cage. She ceased her efforts, and turned to view the chamber. The corners were dark with shadows, but the blackness had given place to a semi-gloom, through which she could discern more plainly the nature of her prison. Twas bare of furniture, a heap of straw lay scattered in one corner, and a large box stood against the wall. It gave her new hope ; with its assistance she might loosen a second board, making an opening sufficiently large to admit the passage of her body. Untrammeled by skirts, for she still wore the suit which she had borrowed from her brother's wardrobe, it would be no great matter to gain from the top of the box the level of the slanting roof. Once upon it, the distance to the ground would warrant her in an attempt to reach it, when escape might be possible.

She found it empty, and by dint of great exertion, though noiselessly, drew it beneath the opening. As yet no sound had come from the room below ; had her jailer fallen asleep, or left her ? If the latter, he would doubtless return, perhaps with companions. Her fears again began to gain ascendancy. A desire to thrust aside the board and reach the roof almost overcame her, but summoning all her will, she waited, knowing well that haste might bring misfortune and render her position more terrible.

At length the light from without lessened ; the sun had sunk below the tree-tops of the forest, and before another hour she would be again in darkness. The thought aroused her ; if escape

was to be effected by the roof she must know her bearings, for a false step might ruin all.

Standing upon the box she noiselessly pushed aside the loosened board, holding it firmly with one hand that it might not fall to the ground. Success crowned her efforts, and raising her head cautiously through the opening she was enabled to see what lay before her ; the roof formed of rough boards slanting to within a dozen feet of the ground, the edge of the forest, and the two horses fastened to a tree. The sight set her heart beating painfully ; once in the saddle and upon the road over which she had come, there was small fear of any overtaking her. The presence of the second animal showed her the countryman could not be far away, as he would not have left his horse behind.

The thought was answered by a noise below, a long-drawn yawn and the shuffling of feet. Her jailer had been asleep ; it was evident he awaited a companion.

Returning to the loft she awaited with throbbing heart the coming of the darkness, which, before, she had so much dreaded. The nature of the roof, the position of the horses and the way she must take, were mapped out clearly in her mind. The movements of the man below told her he had turned his attention to the stove ; the thought of supper warned her that she had not eaten for many hours ; the countryman would scarce leave her to starve, and with this idea a daring project came into her mind. For a moment she trembled, was filled with horror, and instinctively shrunk from it, the woman within her rebelling at so desperate an undertaking.

Another hour passed. The day was gone, but

in its place the first faint rays of the moon appeared above the edge of the forest. The man in the room below moved about restlessly. She heard him leave the cabin, evidently to look to the horses, then, as he returned, she crouched behind the box and waited.

It was perhaps half an hour when the creaking of the ladder indicated that her jailer was ascending to the loft ; what his purpose might be she guessed, and shuddered, but his words reassured her.

“Here is bread and meat,” growled he, drawing the bolt, “if you are thirsty there is water from the spring in plenty.”

He raised the trap, pushing the supper upon the floor. “Come,” said he, “eat ! he will be here presently.”

Controlling her voice by an effort she thanked him. The man was surprised ; he had expected tears and protestations. That he might discern her form in the darkness, he thrust his head yet further through the opening ; the light from below revealed it against the blackness beyond.

Suddenly the girl bent forward, her arm resting upon the edge of the box ; the man strained his eyes and would have again addressed her, but ere the words left his lips, there was a blinding flash, a deafening report, the head disappeared as if by magic, and she heard the crash of his body as it struck the floor below.

Again sudden terror seized her, and the pistol dropped from her hand. She felt a deadly faintness, but, bracing herself with an effort, hastened through the opening to the room beneath ; her work was but half done, and he had spoken of another.

The body of the countryman lay at the foot of the ladder, with limbs outstretched, and the head twisted at an awkward angle. She sought to turn away her eyes as she hurried past him, but in the one glance noted a dull red spot near the head, which, even as she looked, grew larger. That he was dead she believed. Taught from her youth in the use of fire-arms, she had equaled her brother's skill in their days of practise; far poorer marks than a man's head protruding through a lighted opening had felt her bullets, therefore she doubted little that her shot aimed with deadly intent had pierced the brain.

True to her womanly instincts she shuddered, when, springing from the ladder, she was forced to step across the motionless body. A short survey of the room showed her the untasted supper upon the table; beyond, the half-closed door, and in the corner, saddles which the fellow had removed from the horses.

Pangs of hunger asserted themselves, and she despatched a hasty meal, for to venture upon the road required strength, and the long day's fast had weakened her. Afterward, when all was past, she marveled at her fortitude; how, in the presence of the dead, slain by her own hand, with the fear upon her that other enemies were lurking near, she could swallow the unpalatable food. But, as in a mighty storm a sudden calm falls upon the earth, hushing for a time the tumult of the winds, so, in the midst of the sickening terror which clutched her heart-strings, there came to her a marvelous quietness, born of desperation. Had any one come upon her then, she would have faced them boldly; having passed through the hour of trial, when hope seemed gone, the reali-

zation of the dangers which encompassed her was deadened ; the delicate woman had become a machine, acting instinctively for self-preservation ; a living automaton, moving as Fate directed her. No sounds save those that come with the night in the boundless wilderness disturbed her ; the yellow flame of the rude lantern standing upon the table flickered fitfully, casting weird shadows about the room. She was alone but for the motionless body lying outstretched beside the ladder, yet she felt no fear ; the eye of God watched over her even in the desolation of the forest.

Crossing to the spot where lay the saddles, she took up one at random, and pushing open the half-closed door stepped across the threshold.

The moon had risen, bathing the clearing in a mellow light ; beyond, in the forest, long white streaks penetrated the foliage, lending fantastic forms to the trees and rocks. 'Twas the work of but a moment to gain the horses ; her own, recognizing his mistress, whinnied joyfully, and rubbed his soft nose against her shoulder.

This act of welcome moved her strangely ; the tension of her overwrought nerves relaxed, and throwing her arms about the animal's neck she sobbed aloud. The sound awakened a thousand echoes in the forest, unearthly voices came to her out of the shadows answering each other in plaintive cadence through the silent air. Again terror seized her ; with trembling fingers she adjusted the saddle, tore away the halter which secured the horse, and gained her seat upon its back.

For a moment horse and rider remained immovable, she with her eyes fixed upon the silent cabin through whose door drifted a stream of yellow light, mingling with the whiteness with-

out. Then, with the sense of her liberty and escape from deadly peril rising within her, she caught up the reins and urged the beast toward the opening in the fringe of the forest, which, like a wall, surrounded her.

The road, shut out from the moon's rays by overhanging branches, was in semi-darkness ; she could but trust to the instincts of the horse to guide her in safety. With ears erect, the faithful animal bounded forward, his hoofs sounding dully upon the soft earth of the leaf-strewn path. The cry of a night bird startled by the galloping steed rang in her ears ; once an overhanging branch nearly swept her from the saddle, leaving a crimson welt upon the bloodless cheek.

A thousand voices seemed to follow her, strange sounds of the night intensified by her isolation and imagination. The moments passed quickly ; the horse, refreshed by hours of inactivity, sped onward toward the open country, as though he too sought to leave behind the gloom of the forest with its weird sounds and shadows. Just ahead the road turned sharply, where the moonlight, finding a rift in the overhanging foliage, flooded the way with a halo of silvery light, and within this circle rode a horseman making his way toward the ill-omened cabin.

Hearing the approach of the madly galloping steed, he pulled up beside the bridle-path in much astonishment. At the same instant she saw him, a ghostly figure standing, as though to bar her way to liberty, and unconsciously her fingers tightened upon the reins. The next moment she was past, her knee almost grazing his own, so narrow was the way between them. Ere he could raise his voice in challenge, or seek to stay her, she was gone, a fleeting shadow speeding like the wind.

"And we can find it?"

"With little difficulty, as the man has offered to lead us there, and thus on to the discovery of the girl."

An hour later we were upon our way to the cross road, accompanied by the guide. We had ridden into Chester the night before gloomy and dispirited; we left it with hope rising in our hearts, and with one who, of all men in the Carolinas, could best aid us, and we also had the knowledge of the route she whom we sought had taken. Nature, too, seemed eager to lend her aid to the expedition; everywhere the country smiled with gladness; the heavens were bright with sunshine, and the voices of a thousand birds and insects rejoiced in unison.

On the road we beguiled the time with conversation and the moments passed quickly. Late in the morning, having ridden for many hours without halting, we came upon a tavern close beside the highway. McDowell, who, with our guide, was in advance, pulled up before the door; as we approached he turned to General Marion.

"In another hour," said he, "we will reach the road we seek; would it not be well to rest the horses before proceeding further?"

We also were truly fatigued, and needed refreshment; the cool breeze of the early morning had given place to a sultriness, augmented by the rays of the sun which beat from a cloudless sky upon our heads. Had our errand been less pressing, I would fain have sought the shelter of one of the many cottages which we passed, and I believe Clark would have gladly joined me; as for Marion and the two Carolinas, they appeared

less uncomfortable, being accustomed to the southern atmosphere.

We dismounted and were somewhat surprised that the owner of the dwelling did not come forth to greet us, when the guide, who had advanced to the door, uttered an exclamation, and I at the same moment casting my eyes upward, saw the muzzle of a rifle threatening me from a small window close beneath the eaves.

"What now?" cried McDowell, who, noting the start of alarm and following my gaze, perceived it also. "Who threatens us in this rude manner? if there are British within——"

A voice from behind the rifle replied gruffly: "As to Britishers, you should know, being one. Begone, therefore, the house is well defended."

"What says he?" cried the guide, hastening to our side, "Who talks of Britishers, John Rood, and threatens even General Francis Marion?"

An exclamation of astonishment came through the open window, and the threatening rifle was withdrawn. The disappearance of the rude welcomer was followed by the unbarring of the door, when the owner of the tavern presented himself upon its threshold. Seeing General Marion he broke into a torrent of apologies.

The officer checked him. "'Tis scarce so grave a matter," said he, "but why have you turned your house into a fortress, and threaten peaceful travelers in so discourteous a manner? Are the British in the neighborhood?"

"Sir," replied the landlord, greatly embarrassed that he had treated him with such scant ceremony, "those who wear the king's uniform have not troubled me, but certain of the Tories are about,

and for the safety of my property I barred the door."

"What Tories?" demanded McDowell, "we have ridden this day from Chester unmolested."

It was with difficulty we dispelled the man's fears, even when upon investigation we found those whom he had taken for Tories were but a peaceful trio of farmers who, while we debated, appeared from behind the house in some trepidation at the armed force halting at the tavern.

Despite the seriousness of our errand, I could but smile at the discomforture of the landlord, that he should have threatened with a blunder-buss his real protectors. From the farmers we learned that no enemy had been seen in the vicinity. Several Tories having drawn together a half score of ruffians, had made practise of attacking those who fell in their way, but the victory at King's Mountain sent them elsewhere, as they knew full well if taken by the enraged inhabitants of the district, they could expect little mercy.

The landlord, having fallen into his normal condition, hastened to set before us refreshments, refusing the payment I offered, as though thus to make amends for his courtesy to General Marion; we then once more resumed the saddle and pushed on toward our destination.

As McDowell had said, within an hour we reached the road we sought, a way of little promise, passing through a country wild and desolate, filled with rank vegetation, flanked by swamps and strips of woodland. Arriving at the spot where, the day before, our guide had seen Mistress Bourmont and her escort, he called our attention to it, and told us the direction they had

taken. There were signs of horsemen in the road, uncertain to my inexperienced eye, but plain, as if mapped out on the open palm, to Clark and the Carolinian.

We rode forward briskly, for the space of two hours, when the path entered a forest, the shade of which offered welcome relief from the burning rays of the sun. I noticed that Clark, who before had ridden behind the guide, now assumed the van of our little cavalcade, examining carefully the ground, frequently pulling up his horse into a walk, then pushing forward with speed. In truth, we could have had no better guide, for, skilled as he was in the craft of the wilderness, taught in early years among the Indians of the north, the intrepid ranger saw in each footprint, the twist of a branch, or droop of a leaf, some sign which guided him.

Suddenly I saw him spring from his horse and examine the ground, trees and bushes with great care. Upon our approach he pointed to a spot beside the path, where the earth was trampled, the underbrush broken and stripped of leaves.

“Look,” said he, “a horse was urged from the way into the brush through fright, or that another might pass.”

“Let us ride as fast as possible,” said our guide, “if I mistake not the road ends at an opening in the forest.”

For a half hour we followed the ranger, stopping at intervals that he might study the ground, for the imprint of many hoofs appeared in the soft loam of the path. In this manner we pushed forward until suddenly Clark stopped at the edge of the clearing referred to by the guide.

“Yonder is a house,” said he, “the dwelling

of one Silas Bright, a Tory, much feared by the peaceful folk of the neighborhood."

"Let us approach it," said I, "perhaps——"

"Stay," replied McDowell, "if this Bright is at home, a rifle bullet may greet you. I know the place, a den of thieves and murderers, given over to those who plot against the Colonies."

"Let us dismount," said Marion, "that we may examine carefully; if I mistake not a horse stands yonder beneath the shelter of the trees."

Following the direction indicated by his gesture, I perceived the animal fastened by a long rope, which was secured to a stake driven in the ground.

"The place is inhabited," said Clark, "but those inside cannot have seen us, there being no windows this way. Let us get under cover of the trees, picket our horses, and then try to find out who are within. Indeed Mistress Bourmont may be a prisoner in the house."

"Then, if you imagine so," said I, "let us at once demand her deliverance."

A grave smile crossed the face of Marion. "If the maid is held a prisoner," replied he, "we will rescue her, but certain caution is necessary in such an understanding. We must wait patiently; those inside, not suspecting our presence, will certainly show themselves before nightfall."

"But the ruffians may injure her," cried I, "while we tarry; a——"

"If such was their purpose," replied the General, "it is now too late to prevent it; nothing would remain for us, but to avenge Mistress Bourmont."

Thus we decided to wait in the shadow of the

forest some sign from those we sought, or, if no one appeared outside the cabin before nightfall, Clark and the Carolinian would make a closer survey.

Until the first shades of evening we remained hiding, watching intently the clearing, but not a person appeared; only the horse, moving in the circle allowed by his halter, broke the silence.

The last rays of the sun had touched the top-most branches of the trees, when Clark, who lay beside me, started upright, turning his ear toward the road by which we had come. The echo of hoofs, faint and indistinct, came through the stillness, each moment growing louder as though the beast sought to reach the clearing before the blackness of night covered it.

"Some one rides in haste," muttered Marion, "remain quiet that he may not discover us."

Even as he spoke the horseman passed, a black shadow in the twilight, before we could note his person.

Gaining the clearing, he rode straight to the entrance of the cabin, looking backward as he drew rein before the doorstep.

"We are discovered," I whispered, "let us—"

The open palm of the ranger, laid across my mouth, checked further utterance.

Before I could thrust it aside, angered at so rude an interruption, the meaning of the action was made plain to me.

From out the gloom of the overhanging trees, riding along the path, appeared two other horsemen, whose approach was so silent, that my ill-timed impatience had nearly betrayed our presence.

CHAPTER XI.

MAJOR BROOKS' RECITAL.

THE arrival of the three at the cabin in the forest so close after our coming, filled me with much disquietude, nor could I refrain from questioning General Marion as to his opinion upon the matter. He replied courteously, saying he understood my anxiety, but as yet could scarce comprehend the meaning of what was passing. As to Clark and the Carolinian, the first shades of night saw them start upon their errand, which was to discover whether Mistress Bourmont was held a prisoner in the cabin, and who were its occupants.

General Marion in the meantime stretched himself beneath a tree to await their return, and I drew a little aside, leaving the guide to look to the safety of the horses. Being now alone, the excitement of the day somewhat abated, I could but think of the unusual position in which I found myself placed, nor scarce repress a smile at thought of the amazement of certain ones at Versailles, could they at that hour have taken in the situation.

I considered the purpose for which I had left France ; an errand apparently forgotten during the stirring incidents following my arrival in the Carolinas. Entrusted by the King and my patron with a certain mission, the discovery of the Vi-

comte, was I not laying myself open to censure by neglecting it, as each hour of delay might destroy the possibility of success?

Close upon these reflections came the thought of Constance Bourmont, and the ill-fortune which had befallen her. Trained at the Court of France, taught the chivalry belonging to the courtier of the day, and that there was honor in serving a woman, still my heart had never felt a responsive thrill toward any lady of the Court of Louis the Sixteenth who had pleased to favor me beyond my station. That my accidental advent into the Bourmont household had worked a change I could not deny. The noble daring of Mistress Constance filled me with admiration which was not to be repressed; contrasted with the women of the Court, she became their peer. I felt strangely moved in her presence, an emotion never aroused by women, perhaps more beautiful, and better skilled in arts taught by the proudest court in Europe.

I did not acknowledge to myself a deeper feeling than admiration, but the thought of the maid in distress, filled me with an unfamiliar disquietude which I hardly understood. My errand and the King's command stood against a maid of the Colonies, and—I chose the maid.

The pressure of a hand upon my shoulder broke the reverie. Alarmed that any one should have stolen upon me unperceived, I started, instinctively reaching for my sword hilt.

"Upon my faith," chuckled Clark, for it was he, "had I been an enemy—" then more soberly: "Mistress Bourmont is not there."

"Is she slain?" cried I, "or—"

"'Tis scarce so serious," replied the ranger,

"but there is one yonder who may be able to give some word of her."

"Major Brooks?" said I.

"He of the Red House tavern," he replied, "and with him are two as fine ruffians as can be found in all the Carolinas."

The approach of General Marion, McDowell and the guide interrupted any further questioning.

"It is time to act," said Marion. "Mistress Bourmont is not in the cabin, but there are those with whom we must have some reckoning."

"Will we then attack the house?" I asked eagerly.

With the grave smile, which was habitual to him, he replied: "It is fitting, they being enemies to the Colonies." Then turning to McDowell: "You will tell M. de Marc the result of your errand; he should know."

I noted he did not ask whether it was my intention to join him in the desperate business on hand. At King's Mountain a place was not given me, but General Marion seemed to count as a matter of course upon my sword. I needed not this inducement to listen to the Carolinian concerning the result of his night's adventure.

Upon leaving us, he and Clark proceeded with much caution through the fringe of forest, which skirted the clearing, until, coming to a place opposite the rear of the cabin, they left the wood, and under cover of the darkness approached the building. They found the place had no windows on the lower floor, was built of logs, somewhat worn away by time and the inclemency of the weather. The door was on the further side, but they needed no better opening both for seeing

and hearing what transpired within, than that afforded by the numerous cracks between the logs. Quietly and quickly the Americans gained the rear wall, and two pairs of eyes looked from the darkness into the lighted room.

At a table drawn into the center two men were seated; a third lounged upon a bench near the fireplace, in which a log smoldered fitfully. The first were clad in the rough habiliments worn by those of this mountainous district; the other the uniform of a Continental officer, and in him the quick eyes of those without recognized their companion of the Red House tavern. But, though the whole interior of the place save the narrow attic was visible, Mistress Bourmont could not be seen, and it was to gain a knowledge of her that Clark and the Carolinian had ventured to approach the cabin.

What they sought was speedily revealed, as those within talked openly, especially Major Brooks, being a leader among them, and gifted with fluent speech. For a full hour the two men kept their watch. Heard him say that when flung so rudely from the tavern, his senses had for a time deserted him, and it was close upon our departure, when returning reason brought a realization of the indignity offered to his person; being bound and powerless he could devise no way of retaliation. While he lay close to the wall of the tavern some words of Mistress Bourmont, touching upon her errand, reached him. Being a knave of quick perception, he saw in them a way, whereby, if fortune favored him, he could take his revenge. Therefore, he raised no outcry, but lay as one dead, while those against whom he plotted prepared to leave Red

House. No sooner, however, had the hoof-beats of the horses died away, than he summoned the landlord to his assistance and was speedily liberated ; from whom also he learned much that had escaped him when he lay unconscious outside the tavern.

Scarce had he, with help, set aright his disordered raiment, and nursed his bruises, when there alighted before the house a countryman of the neighborhood, an arrant Tory, and one whom the officer had known previously. A few words of flattery, and the jingle of a gold piece soon enlisted the fellow in such business as his patron chose to lay before him. Having come to an agreement they followed us, and thus learned of our departure for King's Mountain.

So excellent an opportunity was not to be neglected. With such knowledge as would serve his purpose, the countryman sought Mistress Bourmont, lured her from the protection of the escort, and conducted her to the cabin in the forest to await the coming of his employer.

Having related so much to his companions (as also to the ranger and McDowell), the Major paused to note the effect upon his minions. They, wishing to know the end of the matter speedily, remained silent and the leader resumed his narrative.

Having timed his arrival at the cabin so that the darkness would hide his movements, he entered the forest close after nightfall, and proceeded with such speed as the condition of the road permitted. Riding thus through a lane of blackness, for the overhanging trees shut out the moon, there fell upon his ear the thud of a muffled tramp, which, as he paused to listen, drew nearer.

Alarmed that any one should be upon the road at that hour, and realizing that the other might ride him down in the darkness, he pressed against the bushes, intending to hail the horseman ere he passed. But he reckoned not upon the shortness of time in which to carry out the determination. Ere his voice could perform its office, the hoof-beats rang in his ears like thunder, and the panting of a madly galloping steed filled the stillness of the forest. Bewildered, he drew back yet further, escaping by a hair's breadth the on-rush of horse and rider. For a moment he clung desperately to the saddle, scarce realizing the narrowness of his escape from death, or painful injuries. Who the reckless rider might be he could not conjecture, for he had chosen the cabin as a place shunned by the people of the region round about, and seldom visited.

He tarried for some moments to regain his composure, looked carefully to his pistols, and then proceeded on his way with much caution. Arriving at the clearing, the flood of moonlight which greeted him showed no lurking danger; moreover the cabin door was open, a light burned within, and beyond the outhouse a horse whinnied faintly.

Reassured, he approached the dwelling with pistol ready should occasion require a defense. But no sounds save those of the night and the movements of the horse greeted him. Unconsciously he half turned in the saddle, gazing anxiously at the black wall of forest encompassing him on every side. Then apprehension gave place to anger. Why did not his hireling come forth, or was it his horse which had just missed him in the blackness of the narrow forest road?

If so, what of Mistress Bourmont? That she had left the protection of her escort, and accompanied the countryman, he knew; of this he had made sure. Had she escaped, or—With impatient haste he dismounted and peered through the open doorway; a lantern burned dimly upon the rude table; in the corner he saw a saddle, and near the foot of the ladder lay what seemed a large package, perhaps dropped from the loft above. The open trap filled him with misgivings; the house was apparently deserted, yet a horse grazed without, and its trappings lay before him.

Entering cautiously, he approached the huddled mass upon the floor. His foot touched a dark stain upon the rough, unplanned boards. With an exclamation of horror he crossed to the table, caught up the lantern, and bending down examined the suspicious thing. The glare from the burning wick shone upon the white, upturned features of a man, the dead face of his agent, whose half-closed eyes peered up at him in the ghostly light. It required no second glance to discover how the man had died; in the forehead, close to the edge of the unkempt hair, was visible a red-rimmed hole, the path of a bullet fired by no unsteady hand.

For a moment Major Brooks stood as one turned to stone, then the cruelty of his nature gained ascendency, and he cursed the dead, that his errand had failed. Whose hand had fired the fatal bullet he knew not, yet scarce believed it was the girl's. More likely some one had followed her and killed the countryman, who should have guarded his prize more carefully.

With great coolness he replaced the lantern upon the table, and set about destroying all signs

of the catastrophe. An unused well served the purpose of a grave ; a bucket of water from the spring removed in part the red stain upon the floor. Having accomplished his task he sat down to solve the riddle. Great was his disappointment in not finding Mistress Bourmont in the cabin. To secure her he must now turn to other means, and make more sure. If she was the horseman of the forest he might yet overtake her, a woman, and unfamiliar with the country. If, on the other hand, she eluded him, they (the two mountaineers) must find her.

He had then remounted his horse and retraced his steps, beating the country until daylight, but with ill-success ; therefore had summoned his companions to the cabin, that they might receive his instructions, and set forth early in the morning on their errand. Perhaps the girl had rejoined her companions of the Red House tavern, but they were only three, the country unsettled, and they might easily be overcome. A dozen men would answer his call, stanch Tories who had not forgotten the scene on King's Mountain. He and they sought for revenge ; as for the two, he would pay them in good English gold.

CHAPTER XII.

THE ATTACK ON THE LOG HOUSE.

GENERAL MARION had a double purpose in attacking the cabin ; to avenge the injury done Constance Bourmont, and to aid the cause of the Colonies by striking a blow at those who were partisans of Lord Cornwallis.

The discovery that Major Brooks was a traitor to the uniform he wore was scarcely a surprise to Clark and the Carolinian ; his words at the Red House tavern aroused suspicion in their minds, and his insult to a seemingly defenseless woman spoke more of the Tory renegade than of an American officer. Through Mistress Bourmont's misfortune his treachery was made known, otherwise we should have continued on our special errand, leaving the other to his plotting. So, with double reasons, we prepared to close in upon the cabin. It was an hour when those within would have the least fear of danger.

The guide would have accompanied us, but General Marion objected, as the discharge of firearms and the like would affright the horses, and they must be guarded, for we could not run the risk of their breaking halters and being lost to us.

He turned to the disappointed countryman, saying : "We are even now four to three, though the enemy has the advantage, as they are protected by walls of logs. You can best serve the

Colonies by holding in readiness the horses; we might be attacked from the outside by others coming up, in which case they are our only safety."

A plan was quickly formed. Marion and the Carolinian would approach the house from the front, force open the door and fall upon those within while they slept; averse to unnecessary bloodshed it was the desire of the commander that if possible they should be taken prisoners. Clark and I would gain the rear of the building, blocking the way to the out-house where were quartered their horses; if they escaped Marion and McDowell they would find us to deal with.

The brightness of the moon was dimmed, when, having cautioned the countryman to watch carefully the road over which reinforcements must come, did they approach the clearing, Marion and the Carolinian left the shelter of the trees and made for the door of the cabin. At the same moment Clark beckoned that I follow him, and plunged into the bushes. Doing so I made a detour, issuing from the forest at the point from whence, a few hours before, he and McDowell had gained the rear wall of the dwelling.

Silence reigned. A shadow cast by a passing cloud threw a black fantastic shape athwart the clearing, through which I could discern the distorted form of the log house, weird and ghost-like. From between the cracks in the logs, the yellow gleam of the lantern within shone in long streaks of wavering light, but no voice broke the stillness; the three Tories unmindful of danger slept soundly.

The ranger paused for a moment at the edge of the underbrush and said slowly: "Perhaps it may seem an ill thing to attack sleeping men, for some

blood is sure to be spilled to-night; but M. de Marc will readily perceive that we deal not with soldiers, or honest countrymen, but spies and cut-throats, whose business it is to pillage, and insult defenseless women."

"Then," said I, comprehending the meaning of his words, "those within may not be taken prisoners?"

For reply, he looked to the priming of his rifle. "'Tis well to have one's weapons handy," replied he shortly, "we shall have need of them."

Thus speaking he stepped into the clearing, and hidden by the shadow from any watching eye, we noiselessly approached the cabin.

Looking through a crack, I saw that in the lower room was but one man, who, wrapped in his cloak, lay snoring upon a bench; the regular breathing of those who lay upon the straw betrayed their presence. A grim smile crossed the stolid countenance of the American, and I saw his finger go instinctively to the trigger. For a moment a thrill of pity for those within took the place of anger for the insult to Mistress Bourmont. How small their chance before the determined purpose of the ranger and the Carolinian! But thought of the hours of anguish passed by Constance in the cabin steeled my heart to all inclination toward mercy; the mountaineers were mere hirelings and could be left to the rifles of my companions, but Major Brooks should answer to me, if he escaped the wrath of the Americans whose cause he had betrayed.

A movement before the house drew my attention from observations of the interior. The door was bolted on the inside, but General Marion and McDowell soon overcame that obstacle. As I withdrew my eyes from the examination crack, a crash broke the stillness of the night, which to my ex-

cited imagination sounded like the rending asunder of the very walls themselves. My companion uttered an exclamation as he bent forward to look within. Following his example I saw the door tremble upon its hinges, the next moment a second crash, and the panel was shattered, beaten in by the heavy stock of the Carolinian's rifle.

In an instant there was confusion in the cabin. At the first assault the man lying upon the bench, and whom I recognized as Major Brooks, sprang to his feet reaching for the brace of pistols which were on the table. The second onset brought to his assistance those who were above. Being so suddenly awakened the three men could not at once comprehend what had befallen. The noise alarmed them, and the sight of the splintered door, with the appearance of a rifle stock, brought to each a realization that the place was attacked, and they must defend themselves.

Although a coward and ruffian, Major Brooks was the first to recover himself. Who those outside were he knew not, unless Mistress Bourmont, after regaining liberty, had directed certain ones to her former prison. While hesitating, with pistols in readiness, the barrel of a rifle was thrust through the opening in the panel, and a voice which I recognized as General Marion's said :

"Sir, it is the desire of those who hold you at their mercy to avoid unnecessary bloodshed; you may find it best to surrender peaceably."

Clark muttered under his breath, and although unable to catch his words I knew he little favored Marion's conciliatory speech.

For a moment the Major replied nothing, then, although the muzzle of the rifle threatened him, answered in a defiant manner :

"I know not to whom I speak, or who calls upon us to surrender. Concealed by the darkness, it is safe to come against a peaceful dwelling and threaten, but robbers and cut-throats will find little here of value."

"Fine speeches," growled my companion, "mean-while some plot is brewing."

Marion and the Carolinian appeared to hold a consultation.

"Come!" again cried the Major, "who demands surrender?"

As I watched him closely I noted that even as he spoke he shifted slightly his position, edging nearer to the table upon which stood the lantern.

General Marion seemed not pleased with the Major's speech, for his voice rang out sharply, "We are those who serve the Colonies; whose business it is to seek out traitors and——"

Before he could finish his sentence, the Major's hand nearest the table swept outward, hurling the lantern to the floor, leaving the room in total darkness. Before the crash died away a blinding flash filled the cabin, and the report of McDowell's rifle set other echoes ringing.

If the shot took effect no sound from within revealed it; there was a rush of feet, the creaking of the ladder and a second shot from the Major's pistol. His companions had fled into the loft leaving him to defend the door.

"This comes of speech-making," muttered Clark, "'tis little like the Swamp Fox to meet the enemy with words."

Before I could reply he was gone, and I made haste to join those before the door.

We had aroused the enemy, and being protected by walls of logs, they could set up a stubborn re-

sistance. The bolted door had disarranged Marion's plan, and it needed small perception to know that those within would defend themselves desperately.

I looked about for Clark; he had vanished as noiselessly as the fleeting shadows cast by the passing clouds. Marion greeted me soberly, yet with a smile which calmed my apprehension.

"McDowell proposes to fire the cabin," said he, "but there may be a better way; it is a savage custom to apply the torch when cunning fails."

Not knowing what to suggest I replied nothing, and Marion turned to the Carolinian.

Suddenly the moon burst from a bank of clouds, lighting up the clearing, and revealing every beam and corner of the silent house. An exclamation from McDowell drew me to his side. Following the direction indicated by his outstretched finger, I saw outlined above the slanting peak of the roof, the body of a man. Had the moon remained hidden, he might have gained his purpose, which was to escape in the darkness. Our attention had been concentrated upon the shattered door, and the probability of any one venturing upon the roof, and thus finding a way out of danger, had not suggested itself to my companions.

The lighted heavens which revealed to us the person of the mountaineer, also showed him our little party standing outside. The soft rays of the moon bathed the roof in a silvery radiance, only blotted by the black crouching figure of the hapless man who expected each moment to feel the fatal lead in his vitals.

Perhaps the interval of respite allowed by the inactivity of Marion and the Carolinian rendered the man bold, or, his companion standing beneath the opening in the roof, suggested a means whereby

he might escape from his unpleasant position. With the energy of despair, he sprang suddenly upright, and throwing his body forward disappeared over the ridge of the slanting roof. With an exclamation McDowell darted forward, that he might by circling the cabin prevent the man's escape to the ground on the other side. But before he could cross the intervening space the sharp report of a rifle broke the silence. The death shriek of the Tory sounded before the echo of the shot rebounded from the walls of the forest. Struck in mid-air while dropping from the roof, the fatal bullet reached his heart during the short instant on which hung his chance of liberty.

The absence of Sergeant Clark was explained, for it was his hand which had fired the death-dealing shot at the enemy. He had been trained in the cunning of border warfare, and knew the likelihood of those within seeking just that sort of escape. The succeeding event justified his caution.

As the thud of the body upon the earth reached the ears of those within, a bitter imprecation burst from the lips of the dead mountaineer's companion. Major Brooks remained silent, watching doubtless for a chance to use his pistols. If taken alive he knew well the fate reserved for him; a traitor to the cause of the Carolinas, he could expect no mercy from his captors.

But it was no longer the purpose of General Marion to avoid bloodshed. At any moment reinforcements might come to the rescue of those within, and we perforce become the defenders. Clark had acted with pitiless promptitude; already one of the enemy was dead, and the American commander resolved to end the matter quickly. Possessed of an indomitable spirit, and accus-

tomed to act quickly when in the field, he soon formed a plan of attack. Clark already guarded the out-house, nor could any one leave the cabin on that side unnoticed by him.

In a few words I was told to guard the door, and fire upon whoever showed themselves from within the cabin. General Marion and McDowell would reach the roof from the rear, and gain an entrance through the opening by which the mountaineer had sought to make an escape. When they made a foothold I was to fire upon the door, and the defenders, fearing an attack from the front, might leave the attic unguarded, permitting the entrance of those above. Thus I was left alone before the house, and with a pistol in each hand awaited the appearance of my companions beside the opening in the roof.

Again there was silence in the clearing, a lull before the storm. It seemed a most strange position in which I found myself ; a non-combatant guarding the door of an isolated cabin in the wilderness, and bidden to shoot down a fellow-man with no thought of mercy. At King's Mountain I entered with zeal into the conflict, for there was the excitement of battle ; now I felt depressed and ill at ease, a condition heightened by dismal surroundings.

However, there was short time for brooding ; the head of the Carolinian appeared above the ridge of the roof, and remembering my instructions I leveled a pistol at the door, and fired. An answering shot came from within, as though the defenders wished to show they were on the alert. At the same instant the body of the Carolinian dropped through the opening in the roof, but so noiselessly that those below could have no suspicion of his presence.

I was puzzled that McDowell should enter alone

the house defended by two desperate men. That he was a match for either I knew, but, if beset by both, there seemed small chance of his escaping unharmed. I resolved on the instant to participate in the struggle which would follow his discovery by Major Brooks and his companion. At the first sound of tumult, or the firing of a shot, I would hurl myself against the door; weakened by the previous blows it might give way, when, attacking both in front and rear, we should certainly have them at disadvantage.

My plan came to nothing; while I waited, expecting each moment to hear the signal for taking part in the game, the head of the Carolinian reappeared through the opening. The next moment he regained the roof, clambered over the ridge and disappeared from view.

The meaning of this hurried action soon became apparent. I had scarcely time to note his reappearance, when a tiny glow shone through a crack above the door. The fitful gleam held me spell-bound, an unconscious fascination riveted my gaze upon the narrow crevice through which soon a fiery serpent forced its way toward the outside air. A slender tongue of flame followed the first glow of the spark within; fanned by the night breeze which blew across the clearing, it clutched with tenacious fingers the dry bark upon the logs, shriveling it up, scorching the more solid wood beneath. McDowell had fired the straw stored in the loft, and the enemy must fight a more relentless foe than had yet attacked them.

So intently I watched the progress of the fire that the Carolinian reached my side unnoticed.

"The place is a tinder box," said he, "and the fire has a firm hold. A goodly quantity of straw

was in there, with no water at hand, and they cannot check the flames."

"See," he continued, pointing to a great shower of sparks which suddenly poured through the opening in the roof, "the blaze is discovered, and the fools would beat it out."

"But they will surely come from the house," said I, "if they cannot subdue the flames."

He smiled grimly. "Probably, unless yon traitor is akin to one who cannot be burned with fire. But in any case I warrant he will plot no more, or betray helpless women; of that M. de Marc may be assured."

"And General Marion?" I asked.

"He and Sergeant Clark went to the horses," replied he, "and to make sure that the Tories should not pass the out-house."

The fire, fanned by the draft admitted through the opening in the roof, and the crevices between the logs, burned fiercely. The walls and floors of the loft dry as tinder offered no resistance to the flames which now poured in livid streaks of red and yellow from the blazing pile within. A rosy light mingled with that of the moon; gradually the heavens grew red and a bloody glare filled the whole clearing. Thin wreaths of smoke curled from every crack, which, floating upward, formed a dark cloud hovering like a bird of ill-omen over the fated cabin. As the conflagration increased, the fierceness of the heat drove our enemies from the loft whither they had hastened to put out the blazing straw.

"Look you," said McDowell, "in five minutes more the fire will burn through the floor, and those below must seek safety in flight. Stand ready, M. de Marc, to receive them."

"But," I cried, "would you slay defenseless men driven forth by fire and thus obliged to place themselves at your mercy?" I shrank instinctively from the duty assigned me.

"I would spare them," replied he grimly, "for—the hangman; but they are not defenseless, being well armed and withal most desperate."

I remained silent, resolved to stay my hand unless for self-preservation, or if my companion demanded action. Two—three minutes passed; the upper portion of the cabin became a raging furnace; darting flames encircled the roof on every side: the fall of a beam into the red mass beneath sent heavenward a thousand angry tongues of fire.

McDowell stood at my side, the stern lines of his rugged face illumined by the glare from the blazing pile. Of what he might be thinking I knew not; his hand had applied the spark, yet I scarce thought he gloried in his work. Necessity compelled strong measures, and those within the cabin merited no mercy at the hands of honest soldiers.

That they withstood so long the smoke and heat which filled the lower room amazed me; a sudden thought flashed through my mind.

"The smoke," said I, "perhaps it has overcome them," and I took a step toward the door.

"Hold!" cried the Carolinian, "would you make a target for a pistol shot? They are about to rush upon us."

Even as he uttered the warning, the shattered door was burst open, and Major Brooks followed by his companion crossed the threshold. So begrimed were they with smoke and ashes that it was impossible to distinguish their features. The mountaineer had lost his courage, for no sooner did he perceive us, than, throwing down his rifle,

he cried that he surrendered. Perhaps the Major might have followed his example had not the light from the burning building revealed our features, and he recognized his companions of the Red House tavern. He faced us bravely, but behind the courage was the reckless daring of a desperate animal held at bay. The moral fiber of the man permitted of no genuine heroism; 'twas as a wolf, who, red with the gore of his victim, turns to meet the hounds pressing close upon him. His restless eyes, glazed and bloodshot by reason of the smoke and heat, roamed over our persons, from the stern face of the Carolinian to the level rifle barrel held with no unsteady hand. Faced by certain death—the blazing cabin behind—he saw no way of escape.

"Sirs," said he in a dry, rasping voice, "what would you of me, that you attack a peaceful house with fire and bullets?"

"Had you surrendered," cried I, "General Marion—"

He started, his face paling beneath its covering of sweat and smoke. Suddenly his courage seemed to leave him; for the pistol dropped from his nerveless fingers, and unarmed he advanced toward us, followed by his trembling companion. Whether it was in his mind to throw himself upon the mercy of Marion, trusting that an opportunity for escape might offer, or fresh treachery was in his brain, I know not. As McDowell lowered the muzzle of his rifle, a chorus of angry shouts arose from the forest, and upon the edge of the clearing appeared a company of footmen, who marched toward us with much show of determination.

Bewildered by so unexpected a development, I felt that we were lost, as, standing in the glare of

the burning cabin, we presented a good mark for the guns of those advancing.

McDowell remained motionless, his rifle poised, his gaze fixed intently upon the approaching figures. At the same moment General Marion and the ranger appeared from behind the blazing timbers.

Though they greatly outnumbered us, the line of footmen hesitated, as if uncertain whether to greet us by a discharge of fire-arms, or to hold a parley. One, who appeared to be the leader, wore an American uniform and a cavalry helmet, set off by a flowing horse-tail plume. He came on boldly, pistol in hand, until twenty paces separated him from his companions.

"Sirs," he cried, flourishing the weapon, "it is our purpose to make you prisoners, but if you surrender quietly fair treatment will be accorded you."

A faint smile crossed the features of General Marion, and advancing a step he replied calmly,

"What now, Sergeant Dobson, that you come against us in so determined a manner?"

The wearer of the horse-tail helmet stared incredulously; a murmur of astonishment arose from his companions, and I heard the name of "*Marion*" spoken by a dozen voices.

He approached the leader and a whispered dialogue took place between them, those behind remaining at a respectful distance, but with every eye fixed upon the slender form of the American commander.

We soon learned the cause of their sudden appearance. Mistress Bourmont, after escaping from the cabin, reached those to whom we had entrusted her before our departure for King's Mountain. A recital of her betrayal by the supposed messenger

from Camden aroused in the countrymen a desire to avenge her, and it was decided to proceed in force to the cabin in the forest, hoping to find there some one who would render an accounting.

Choosing for a leader a trooper of Marion's command, they set out on foot, intending to surround the house before any one should suspect their coming, or if the place was tenantless, to burn it to the ground. Hastening through the forest the sound of shots and the glare from the burning cabin filled them with astonishment, but they advanced boldly, little suspecting that General Marion and his companions had forestalled them.

We remained in the clearing until morning, when I with a light heart accompanied the American from the scene of the night's adventure. The knowledge that Constance Bourmont was in safety removed an oppressive weight from my heart. As to the fate of the prisoners who marched with us closely guarded by the countrymen, I could but conjecture. Justice was meted out in that unsettled region with no light hand, and I remembered the incident following the battle of King's Mountain.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE COMING AGAIN TO CHESTER.

NOTHING worthy of note occurred during our return to Chester. Mistress Bourmont had awaited us there after regaining her liberty. Perhaps she greeted me with more warmth of manner than that accorded to Clark and the Carolinian, but of gratitude to those who had served her so well, and risked so much, there was no lack. The anxieties and dangers through which she had passed left their imprint upon her face. There were shadows not seen before, and a vague look of alarm in the eyes. She seemed, too, more womanly, having laid aside the dress of her brother in which she journeyed south, and obtained garments suitable; so it was again the reserved maid who had greeted me on that memorable morning at Bourmont House. Noticing my glance and surmising its cause, a delicate flush overspread her brow, and her eyes sought the ground. Urged on by an indomitable spirit, she had scarcely stopped to weigh the action which sent her among the rough troopers of the south, clad in jacket and breeches, nor methinks, had she given it a thought, when it seemed imperative as a means to an end.

But having cast them aside, maidenly reserve asserted itself. I had thought little of it, understanding her motives, neither had the ranger and McDowell; in truth, her masquerading seemed most natural, and

filled me with admiration. I had accepted her presence as another companion, who would share alike our hardships and our fortunes, for the slender, boyish figure who had sought to defend her honor when assailed by the Tory Major, seemed less the woman and more the quiet youth, untrained in the game of war, but of intrepid spirit.

The meeting at Chester dispelled the illusion ; the blush which overspread her countenance, the flash of the hazel eyes as she raised them half timidly to mine, brought with full force upon me the truth that it was Constance Bourmont of the Westchester hills who stood before me, and not my late comrade of the Red House tavern.

General Marion perceiving the maid relieved the embarrassment which each moment was increasing.

"Mistress Bourmont," said he, extending his hand with much gallantry, "it is indeed a pleasure to meet one whose brother has rendered signal service to his country."

The reference to him, whose presence in the south had brought her hither, and the cordiality of the officer's greeting awakened in her heart a feeling of profound gratitude, for she perceived that Marion, with ready tact, sought to dispel her disquietude.

"I deeply regret," continued he, "that duty renders necessary the severance for the time of an acquaintanceship which I hope will be of long duration. I can remain in Chester but a few hours, having already been absent some days from my command. Were it otherwise I should hold it an honor to accompany you to Camden, where Captain Bourmont awaits you."

"Have you seen him?" cried she anxiously ; "is there any danger?"

"Have no fear," replied Marion ; "though

wounded, your brother is in little danger, of that I have assured myself."

"Ah, sir," I ventured, "is it then impossible for you to accompany us to Camden?"

"It is indeed," replied Marion; "yesterday, having found Mistress Bourmont, I hoped to have done so. But I find an imperative call to the east. I have just heard that certain of our soldiers, also two countrymen of M. de Marc's, have fallen into the hands of the British. It may be the purpose of Cornwallis to send them to the sea-coast; if so, some plan must be devised for their rescue."

His words brought back clearly to my mind the errand for which I had left my native land and now so long neglected. It had been my intention to conduct Constance Bourmont to her destination, but the American commander unconsciously, by his straightforward, simple words, set before me the truth that inclination should yield to duty. With Clark and McDowell at her side the girl needed no other protector. More than this, Marion had spoken of two Frenchmen, and—the Vicomte was in the south.

Constance with quick perception noticed the cloud upon my brow and surmised its cause.

"Sir," said she, turning to General Marion, "you spoke of two from France held by Cornwallis; could it be possible that one is the friend whom M. de Marc seeks?"

"I have heard something of his mission to the Carolinas," replied the officer; "and it would not be an over-strange thing if a prisoner held in Charlotte answered to the description of the Vicomte."

"Then," cried the girl, "of course M. de Marc cannot accompany me to Camden; too much time has already been given for a purpose quite foreign to his errand."

My heart fell with chagrin and sorrow that she should in so light a manner propose my separation from herself, but I stifled the pang, and acquiesced in her decision. In her face I saw an expression of mute surprise at my hesitation when duty called, and I read her thoughts plainly; that to serve her unnecessarily, and thus be withheld from my avowed mission to America, would not enhance my value in her eyes. Of such stuff were made the women of the Colonies! Rousing from my disappointment I turned to General Marion.

"Sir," said I, "I am obliged to trespass upon your courtesy about a matter which fills me with much perplexity. As you know, I was sent from Paris for certain reasons, by my patron the Count le Mans, and his Majesty, Louis the Sixteenth. Grave difficulties have arisen which, alone, I am not able to surmount, but with your advice——"

He checked me by a gesture of frank cordiality. "'Tis unnecessary to petition for what is freely given," said he, "and to that end I was just upon the point of requesting an interview. Having learned from Sergeant Clark the purpose of your journey to the Carolinas I made some inquiries which returned a little information. Certain of your countrymen, unfamiliar with the south, have fallen into the hands of Cornwallis; France and England being at war, he has detained them as prisoners. Whether the Vicomte was among them I know not; the description of their persons was meager."

"Well," said I, "I suppose I can gain information within the English lines."

He looked at me sharply. "Do you then propose to go there?"

"I propose to find the Vicomte," replied I, "and if there is no——"

"They will make of you a prisoner," cried Mistress Bourmont, her cheeks paling; "it would be the height of rashness."

Marion smiled gravely. "Under certain conditions," said he, "the venture might not be so serious. Lord Cornwallis is not without honor: under a flag of truce your person would be respected."

It was a sudden and perhaps bold resolve which I had made, but if the Vicomte was a prisoner in the camp of the British, there could be no gain in continuing a search through the Carolinas, and the clue which General Marion had given me must not be lost. I would enter the enemy's lines without dissimulation, and, Lord Cornwallis being a soldier, could scarcely refuse me an audience. Anxious to lay the plan before Clark and McDowell, I took leave of Mistress Bourmont, promising to soon rejoin her. The words of General Marion had somewhat quieted the fears aroused by my determination to pass within the lines of the enemy at Charlotte, but I would have been blind not to perceive her agitation when assured of my purpose to separate from those upon whom in a great measure I had depended for guidance and safety.

I found my companions listening to a discussion between some countrymen as to the probable fate of our prisoners. Many were for hanging them without trial or mercy; a few, however, advised delay, but they were in the minority. Had Major Brooks and his companion been left to the mercies of their captors they would have had short shrift. It was well known that General Marion countenanced no violence against the person of a prisoner of war, but to spies and traitors he meted out such justice as the case warranted.

As Clark and the Carolinian saw me, they with

drew from the others, and I told them my decision. After a moment's thought the ranger replied gravely: "It is not improbable that the Vicomte, being a stranger to the country, has fallen into the hands of the British, and is in Charlotte. It is your mission to lay before him the commands of his father and necessary that you go to him, for, even if at liberty, he knows nothing of your presence in America. But something more must be thought of; if you do not find him in Charlotte, and Cornwallis detains you as a prisoner, your usefulness will be ended. Have you considered well the undertaking?"

I replied in the affirmative, and that I could see no other way than the path which led to the headquarters of the English commander.

"Then," replied Clark, "I propose to go with you, having promised General Lafayette—"

The proposition astonished me. It was one thing for me, a non-combatant, to enter the English lines; quite another for so zealous a patriot as the ranger to venture into the power of the enemy.

"It will be a useless sacrifice," I cried. "Cornwallis can scarcely harm *me*, but *you* will lose your liberty."

He would have further urged had not General Marion at that moment joined us, and overheard my words. Inquiring the meaning, and by what chance the ranger was like to lose his liberty, he added his protest to mine.

"M. de Marc is right," said he. "General Lafayette would not approve of so hazardous an errand, particularly for one who is most useful to the cause of liberty. It would be a different matter were it necessary to the success of the mission entrusted to M. de Marc, but now, the height of rashness."

"And," added McDowell, "there are those

among the British who would recognize you ; the fate of André is still fresh in their minds."

Under the pressure of good sense and so much argument, Clark yielded, but expressed his determination to guide me to the place from whence I could most easily reach the English lines. We were to leave Chester on the following morning ; General Marion would then accompany the sergeant of dragoons eastward, and McDowell, with half a score of the irregulars, conduct Constance Bourmont to her destination.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PASSING OF A SENTINEL.

UNTIL nearly midnight I held converse with Mistress Bourmont and General Marion, then sought my quarters, thoroughly fatigued from the exciting events of the past few days.

Clark and McDowell had already betaken themselves to slumber; the quiet hamlet was wrapped in silence save for the movements of a few who were gossiping over their cups in the bar-room of the tavern. Looking from a window, my gaze fell upon the structure in which were confined the prisoners awaiting their trial, before General Marion should have left Chester. The moonlight of the night before, which witnessed the destruction of the cabin in the forest, had given place to semi-darkness occasioned by the drifting clouds which obscured the sky. The prison, a rude building of logs, stood a hundred paces from the tavern, and beyond the broad road which passed through the center of the town; further on lay an open meadow flanked by a swamp of no mean pretension, thickly studded with alders and stunted oak.

After extinguishing my light, I tarried a moment at the window and watched the figure of the solitary sentinel who guarded the entrance to the prison, as he passed and repassed across my line of vision. Unconsciously I counted off the seconds; the soldier's instructions were to encircle the house, and at the same time be on the alert for any disturb-

ance within ; ninety seconds elapsed between his disappearance and return ; his step so regular that in ten times around the prison there was not the variation of a fraction from the given number. I knew not why, fatigued and nodding, I should idly watch the rounds of the American ; an irresistible impulse kept me at the window, and the reckoning of the seconds passed my lips without volition.

Suddenly I became aware that the uniformity hitherto maintained had ceased. Insensibly the number ninety-one passed my lips, a hundred—a dozen more, and the spot where the sentry should have been was vacant. Sleepily I wondered where the man could be ; why he had tarried behind the building, and by his non-appearance disturbed my counts. Throwing off with an effort the spell which held me, I turned to seek my couch, when a cry, so faint as to be scarcely heard, fell upon my ear. That, with the non-appearance of the sentinel aroused in me a suspicion that something might be amiss with him. Returning to the window I gazed long and earnestly into the night ; save for the clinking of glasses in the room below, no sound again broke the stillness. It was possible that the soldier but tarried behind the prison, and would shortly reappear. While hesitating what course to pursue, whether to venture forth and satisfy myself that the man's absence and the cry which I had heard meant no ill to him, or to dismiss the matter as one which concerned me little, I thought of Clark and his companion who slept near by, and decided that under the circumstances it would be wise to disturb, placing before them the matter, and the fear of Major Brooks's cunning which had sprung up within me.

Hastily dressing I left my chamber and the next

moment stood by the bedside of the Americans. My footsteps awakened them, and the gruff voice of the Carolinian demanded the reason, while striking a light. They started in alarm on seeing me fully dressed.

“Sirs,” said I quickly, “my apprehension may prove an idle dream and suspicious fancies. I may have accepted a shadow when substance is wanting, but—”

“What is it?” asked McDowell sharply, “has Mistress Bourmont—”

“The maid is safe,” replied I, and then related what had occurred while I watched at the window, concluding with the remark that at first I had resolved to go alone and learn the meaning, but my presence at the prison might be misconstrued, and General Marion disturbed needlessly.

The actions of the Americans were sufficient evidence that I had acted wisely in bringing the affair to them. Before I had finished they were dressed and stood ready to leave the chamber.

“Come,” said Clark gravely, “in such times as these fancies may be important, and should not go unheeded. Let us look after this matter.”

It took but a moment to descend the stairs and gain the entrance to the tavern. Perceiving something was astir those below left their ale glasses, and when, led by Clark, we stepped outside, our party was increased to six or seven.

Giving the curious ones no time for questioning the cause of this midnight venture, the ranger led the way straight to the prison, unchallenged by him who should have guarded it.

“The door is fastened,” whispered he, “let us examine the rear and find the reason of the sentinel’s silence.”

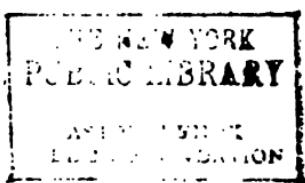
The next moment he uttered an exclamation, and we, who were close behind, saw him stoop over in an excited manner. McDowell hastened to his side and together they lifted to a sitting posture the limp body of a man ; it was the sentinel made unconscious by a blow upon the temple.

Only a glance was required to solve the mystery. Opposite the spot where the unfortunate soldier lay, and close to the slanting roof of the prison, a boarded window, scarce large enough to admit the passage of a man's body, had been forced open. By means of this aperture the prisoners had effected an escape to the ground, when, detected by the sentinel, they took advantage of his momentary surprise to deal the blow which rendered him powerless, and made possible their flight.

A cry of anger and astonishment arose from those who crowded about us, and a dozen eyes sought to pierce the darkness which covered as by a screen the open meadow across which the prisoners had taken their way. My companions laid the unconscious form upon the ground.

"He is dying," said Clark briefly, "the blow has crushed his temple ; it is for us to follow those who have murdered him."

The words aroused the Americans to action. While some hastened to convey the dying sentinel to the tavern, others raised an alarm through the village, awakening those who slept, and making known to them that the Tories had gained their liberty. Thus it was General Marion found ready to hand a band of determined men, armed and eager to pursue Brooks and his companion. It was hardly five minutes after the commander's knowledge of the unfortunate event, when a dozen parties set out upon their errand ; some across the meadow, others along





"ONE OF THE DRAGOONS DISCHARGED HIS RIFLE." P. 149.

the road, while a detail of mounted volunteers, followed a wide circle, hoping to intercept the prisoners when they emerged from the swamps beyond the open country.

Nothing happened during the remaining hours of the night; worn out with sleeplessness, I again sought my chamber, and was awakened by the voice of Clark some hours after sunrise.

From him I learned that the searching parties had returned, having but half accomplished their errand. Aided by the darkness the prisoners reached the swamps and wooded land, baffling their pursuers. Those on foot returned empty-handed. The mounted men were more successful. Having skirted the swamps, they came at daybreak to the further side, where a broad strip of open country separated the marsh-land from an adjoining forest. There they came upon Major Brooks's companion, who, having fallen into a depression, was sorely injured. Though his leg was broken, and his strength exhausted by having dragged himself through the swamp and across the strip of meadow, one among the riders, more merciless than his companions, discharged his rifle, and the ball piercing the Tory's body saved him from further vengeance on part of the Americans.

So the lesser of the culprits paid the penalty of his treachery with his life, but Major Brooks escaped, nor could any trace of him be found, either in the swamps or forest beyond. Further pursuit was abandoned. The morning being well advanced General Marion soon started on his journey in company with the dragoon. Mistress Bourmont waited but to say farewell before setting out for Chester, while I should have been on my separate and lonely way much earlier.

CHAPTER XV.

AT CHARLOTTE.

CHARLOTTE, a village of thirty or forty houses, lay twenty miles north of the line which separates the Carolinas. Occupied by Lord Cornwallis and his army, the neighboring country was filled with British soldiers, Tories and royal partisans. It was among those my errand led me.

Clark had accompanied me almost to the scattered range of hills which marked the district, then prudence, and my urgent request that he would no further expose himself, gained an unwilling assent that I should continue on my way without him. Sitting motionless in his saddle, he watched until a turn in the road hid me from sight, then started back on his way to Chester.

I had gone perhaps a dozen furlongs in the direction of Charlotte, when I saw a score or more horsemen riding toward me at a rapid trot. Their equipments showed them to be English. On perceiving me they checked their speed. They were in strong contrast to the Americans of the region. Their scarlet uniforms, burnished buckles and perfect arms, together with haughty mien and soldier-like carriage, stamped them as regulars ; a part of that intrepid body of dragoons which formed the flower of Lord Cornwallis's army.

With little disquietude, and a degree of satisfaction, I awaited their approach, for, being soldiers of

Europe and not of the Tories, I felt assured of personal safety, and of receiving some show of courtesy.

As they drew near the leader advanced a few paces, stopped, looked at me with some curiosity and said: "Sir, who are you and whither bound? you evidently are not of the rebel yeomanry."

I replied shortly, that I wished to hold speech with Lord Cornwallis on a matter of personal importance.

The dragoon raised his brows. "You are a Frenchman," said he sharply, "and from the south country where are gathered the rebels who have so far escaped us. I make you, therefore, a prisoner."

"I will accompany you willingly," I replied; "it is my desire to answer such questions as his lordship may see fit to ask. My errand is a peaceful one; to learn something concerning certain of my countrymen, who are now confined in Charlotte."

"What your errand may be," said he, "concerns me little, and will be attended to by others. My duty ends here." He then directed two of his dragoons to return to Charlotte and deliver me to the proper authorities at headquarters, then to re-join the party, whose purpose I surmised was to scour the outlying district toward the south. As we were to part he offered a slight apology, saying duty compelled severity even to gentlemen and strangers, then ordered his men into line and, touching his horse's flank lightly with the spur, continued on his way to the accompaniment of hoof-beat and rattling saber.

I could but smile, as, falling in between the two red-coated cavalrymen, I put my animal once more into motion. My entrances into each of the contending armies in America were under an armed and watchful escort. At Tappan the zealous dragoons of Major Talmadge had not allowed me to pass

into the lines unnoticed, and now I was not lacking convoy to the quarters of the English commander.

I had fallen in with the horsemen near the outskirts of the town, so the distance was soon covered. As when approaching the American camp, I perceived numerous bodies of troops; red-coated soldiery, a company of stalwart Hessians encamped by the roadside, Tory partisans, teamsters, and a crowd of camp-followers. Many looked at me with curiosity as we passed, and had I been alone I warrant I should have been accorded a rude welcome. While appreciating the exigency in which I found myself, I noticed a spirit of disquietude prevailed among the soldiers scattered along the road; an expectancy which I could not account for, as the Americans were widely scattered, and the district given over to the King's troops, with small probability that any would dispute their possession. In the town this circumstance was more noticeable. Many were occupied in the loading of carts and wagons, a park of artillery stood ready for the horses, and numerous officers hurried hither and thither, directing, and giving orders.

Our arrival before a house more imposing in appearance than the others which composed the town, interrupted my thoughts. A sentry, who paced stiffly before the entrance, demanded of my guards their errand; upon receiving a reply he summoned a grizzled sergeant, who in turn questioned them.

"His lordship is in consultation with Colonel Tarleton and others," said he gruffly, "but your coming will be announced." Then, in an aside and with a gesture of some meaning: "His temper is scarce fitted for over-indulgence toward those who are not loyal to his Majesty."

Having thus delivered himself, he disappeared, soon returning followed by an orderly who examined me with much interest.

"Sir," said he, "your wishes can now be made known to his lordship; he is at liberty. Your name—that I may announce it."

"M. de Marc," replied I, dismounting from my horse; "it is concerning a personal matter, regarding prisoners, about which I would trespass upon his lordship's courtesy."

The orderly vanished, and for some moments I was left to consider my surroundings, the long street flanked by its fringe of houses, the moving throng of soldiers and civilians, each hastening upon their several errands, though some pausing as they noted a stranger.

The day was far spent as I entered the English lines, and when the orderly returned and bade me follow him into Lord Cornwallis's presence, the first shades of evening touched the landscape.

In a moment I had crossed the broad hall, then, obeying my guide's gesture, entered a room situated at the further end and found myself in the presence of the victor of Camden.

A pair of candles burned upon a table littered with maps, papers, several bottles, and half a dozen wine-glasses. A man dressed in the full uniform of a British general, but without sword or boots, stood in a careless attitude beside the open window. A second, younger, booted and spurred, lounged beside the table, his fingers toying idly with a half-filled glass which he was contemplating with much apparent earnestness. As I entered, each fixed his gaze upon me, the elder haughtily, his companion curiously, and with a half-sneering smile.

For a moment I hesitated; upon those two men,

perhaps, depended the success of my mission to America, and even liberty. Then, seeing that Cornwallis—for such I judged the elder to be—waited, I bowed politely, acknowledging the honor in being granted an audience with him. At my words some of the stiffness disappeared from his manner, for he saw I lacked nothing of the courtesy to which he was accustomed, when, perhaps he had thought to meet a rustic.

“I have been told,” said he, “that you are M. de Marc, a Frenchman, whose presence within our lines is due to a desire to treat concerning certain prisoners. What is your errand?”

“Sir,” replied I, “I have heard that one of my countrymen, the Vicomte le Mans, is now in Charlotte. Entrusted with a message by the Count, his father, I hastened to America to make it known to him.”

“And this message?” asked Cornwallis, “it must indeed be imperative, that a Frenchman should enter thus unceremoniously the presence of an English officer. At Newport, M. de Marc, or on the upper Hudson are to be found many of your countrymen.”

“My purpose in coming to the Colonies was a peaceful one,” I replied; “hearing the Vicomte le Mans was in the south, I had little interest in Newport;” and I repeated the substance of my mission.

A smile crossed the face of his lordship. “What think you of it, Tarleton?” cried he, “our Frenchman is then a runaway!” Then to me: “Your explanation is, indeed, most plain, sir, and your zeal commendable; having delivered the Count le Mans’s message, will the Vicomte return to France?”

“He was ever accustomed to obey,” replied I,

half haughtily, "and to his father's wish is added the King's command."

"Faith!" cried Tarleton, fixing his black eyes upon me, "you take much for granted, sir, but I like your spirit. If his lordship were to make of *you* a prisoner; what then?"

Had I nervously betrayed fear, I think the intrepid leader of dragoons would scarce have befriended me, for, as he said, a daring spirit was to his liking. I answered boldly: "His lordship is a soldier, and in entering your lines I trusted to the courtesy of an English nobleman. My errand may, indeed, be unsuccessful, but even so, Lord Cornwallis would hardly detain me as a prisoner."

Tarleton struck his hand upon the table. "I perceive," said he, "that I have not mistaken you." Then to the General: "M. de Marc's request is reasonable; if it is your lordship's pleasure, I would share with him my quarters while he remains among us."

A look of doubt crossed the face of the other. It was plain he hesitated, for after all, I might be a spy who cleverly sought to blind him. Tarleton, on the other hand, with the reckless impetuosity which characterized him, dismissed from his mind all suspicion; nor was his confidence misplaced. It was indeed my purpose, having accomplished the imposed errand, to espouse the cause of the Colonies; but none should be the wiser on account of my entering the English lines. I had no thought or desire to reveal anything which I might learn to the Americans, nor did I think that General Marion or my companions would wish me to betray a confidence, if Cornwallis allowed me to return.

For a moment his lordship remained silent, seeming to consider the explanation I had given.

"Far be it from me," said he, at length, "to question the word of a French courtier, and a gentleman. I will so far return your confidence in my courtesy, as to permit you to see the prisoner, the Vicomte le Mans being in truth in Charlotte."

Tarleton interrupted my words of gratitude:

"And M. de Marc will on his part pledge his word to your lordship that he shall in nowise betray your trust." This he said with so frank a smile that I comprehended he but wished to influence the other in my behalf.

"But," continued Cornwallis as though unmindful of the interruption, "Colonel Tarleton will be present at the interview; prudence, and my duty as a commander, will not permit greater latitude."

I could but acknowledge the restriction upon my movements as reasonable, the more so that Colonel Tarleton was inclined to receive me with friendliness, and had already offered to act as host during my stay in Charlotte. I had been told that this same colonel of dragoons was hated by the Americans, a relentless foe who swept aside all who opposed him, and dealt sternly with such as fell into his power. Be that as it might, to me he seemed a true soldier and a gentleman, a man of frankness and affability.

"I have met many of your countrymen," said he, "and in several instances they have befriended me. England and France are now at war through the malevolence of certain statesmen; had I met you on the field it would have been an honor to measure swords, but now——"

He filled a glass with wine and extended it to me, at the same time raising his own. "With his lordship's permission, to your health, sir," said he, and drained the glass.

CHAPTER XVI.

A COLONEL OF DRAGOONS.

THE day had waned and night fallen when Colonel Tarleton led the way from Lord Cornwallis's presence to his own quarters, bidding me a welcome to his hospitality. I learned from him the meaning of the subdued excitement which pervaded the town. It was the purpose of the commander to abandon his position in North Carolina and at once return to the southern province. This movement, I surmised, was rendered expedient by the unexpected and mortifying defeat of Furgeon's command at King's Mountain. It was evident that Lord Cornwallis feared for the safety of the lower country which he had gained for the British Crown through the battle at Camden. About this, however, Tarleton spoke nothing. He remarked that his lordship was ill at ease, but attributed it, in part, to an attack of fever from which the General was suffering, contracted amid the swamps of the lower country.

Of the Americans he made light, but acknowledged that the victory over the British at King's Mountain had called forth much bravery on the part of the enemy.

"Furgeon was ill advised," said he, "and offered ample opportunity for the misfortune which overtook him. Had the battle been fought in an open country, where was no shelter for the rebels behind rocks and trees, the result would have been quite different."

"If it is the purpose of his lordship to return to Camden," I ventured, "I am most fortunate in reaching Charlotte before the removal of the prisoners."

Tarleton uttered an exclamation. "Faith," cried he, "your reminder is most delicate; I have detained you unnecessarily, and I can understand you are impatient to see the Vicomte. The house in which he is confined with a dozen others is at the further end of the town. We will go there without more delay."

Suiting action to his words, he summoned an orderly and commanded him to accompany us; then, buckling on his side-arms, preceded me to the street, the man bringing up the rear of our little party.

The quarters in which were confined those whom Lord Cornwallis wished to treat with some show of courtesy was five minutes' walk from Tarleton's headquarters, and as we passed over the way I again noted the preparations for departure which were being made on all sides. The Colonel, seeing my interest in the matter, smiled half grimly and said:

"No doubt it seems strange to you that having conquered the enemy and earned a season of repose, our soldiers should so soon set forth upon a tedious march; but the nature of the war is altogether different from every rule laid down upon the continent; as for instance the affair at King's Mountain. Countrymen and yokels by the scores, quite harmless when separated, but suddenly concentrating, united into an army of such dimensions, that, falling upon a portion of our troops, a movement on the part of his lordship was necessary. No sooner were we in the field than their legions scattered, seeking mountain retreats and swamps where none could find them. They remind me of a multitude of flies, such perhaps as you have seen

M. de Marc, when riding through a country district. Your horse is beset by them ; at the first opposition they flee, and though a few be slain, the swarm is sure to return and buzz with persistence and viciousness about your ears. So it is with these Americans."

He spoke somewhat bitterly, and I saw his restless spirit chafed at the turn affairs had taken. In the open fields his dragoons swept aside the poorly armed and undisciplined forces of the enemy, but no sooner were they dispersed, than the mountain fastnesses poured out others to mock his victory.

"There is one," continued he, "whose cunning is a thorn in the side of the commander. If Marion was taken these rebels would lose their most intrepid leader."

"Then," said I, "you have contended against him."

"That I have," he replied, "and the very foxes which haunt these hills are not more elusive. To-day a hundred men will follow him ; to-morrow a paltry dozen. It is like hunting ghosts, sir, who vanish when one measures to strike."

I said : "I met the man, during my journey here."

Tarleton raised his brows. "I have heard," said he, "that this 'Swamp Fox' is possessed of much courage and spirit ; some of our men who have fallen into his hands speak well of him."

"He is both a soldier and a gentleman," replied I, warmly. "Learning of my errand he offered assistance."

The dragoon looked at me searchingly. "It would be well," said he "that Lord Cornwallis knows little of your dealings with these rebels. This same Marion has annoyed him greatly, but—I thank you for your confidence."

We had arrived at the door of the prison, and

Tarleton, replying to the sentry's salute, motioned me to enter. An officer met us in the hall.

"Sir," said the Colonel sharply, "we would see the Vicomte le Mans; will you lead us to him? —or rather, as he is with others, and our interview must be private, we will wait for him in your quarters."

Somewhat surprised that one who stood next his lordship in authority should seek out a prisoner, the officer threw open the door of a small room set aside for his own accommodation.

"Send him here," said Tarleton shortly, "and see that none disturb us."

When the other was gone, he motioned me to be seated.

"Sir," said he, "speak freely to the Vicomte as though you were alone." He turned to the window and drummed carelessly upon the pane, humming to himself meanwhile. His short, stout figure set off by its scarlet uniform would be the first object to meet the eye of one entering the room.

A strange nervousness seized me. Would indeed the Vicomte enter, or a stranger? What assurance had I that it was my friend who was held here a prisoner by Cornwallis and Colonel Tarleton? His sudden and inexplicable friendliness toward me; did it bode evil, or was he sincere? The sound of footsteps in the hall interrupted my rapid thoughts. A man crossed the threshold and paused irresolutely, his eyes fixed upon the scarlet-clad figure standing by the window. Tarleton turned.

"The Vicomte le Mans!" said he sharply, "you will approach, sir."

Hidden by the open door I leaned forward anxiously, and my heart bounded as I saw that it was indeed Edouard who stood before me. On his

face was a haughty look, and his eyes met fully those of the British officer.

"Sir," said he, speaking in broken English, "you have sent for me; does Lord Cornwallis—"

"M. de Marc," said Tarleton in excellent French, "it may perhaps facilitate this interview if you will address your countryman." He fixed his eyes searchingly upon the Vicomte's face as he uttered my name.

If any suspicion had entered his mind that I was playing a part, and the prisoner was other than I represented, the Vicomte's start of surprise and his expression of incredulity dispelled it. Half turning, he perceived me, and crying "Henri," threw himself into my arms, nor did the presence of Tarleton check the warmth of my greeting. For an instant a smile flashed across his features. "To business, gentlemen," said he, and turned again to the window.

For some moments the Vicomte's amazement and delight at my unexpected presence prevented the words which hovered upon my lips. He overwhelmed me with a torrent of questions—of France, his father, and what I did in America. Fearful lest he should speak too freely in the presence of a British officer, I checked him.

"I am here," said I, "through the courtesy of Lord Cornwallis, and the kindness of Colonel Tarleton. I came from your father and the King—"

"Then you are not a prisoner?" cried he, "I thought—"

"I have been much perplexed to find you," replied I, "and the King's command is imperative, you—"

"The King?" cried he.

"You have poorly repaid his kindness," I continued, "and an old man, your father, is cast into

despair and sorrow through the rashness of his son ; while I——”

He gazed upon me in astonishment, then bowed his head in a depressed manner, and turned away, half in anger.

“Did you follow to censure and admonish ?” asked he sullenly ; “it was not so when Lafayette——”

I glanced apprehensively at the figure by the window, but Tarleton apparently paid no attention to our dialogue. Impatient that he, only a boy, should speak thus, I replied with some spirit : “I have scarce journeyed from France and sought for you throughout the Colonies to now pass only idle words. Much distressed in mind, your father summoned me to the King’s cabinet, beseeching that I hasten after, and bid you return to France.” I repeated my interview with the Count le Mans and with his Majesty.

In a moment the Vicomte’s mood changed ; he approached and spoke tenderly. “Ah, Henri ! I did not think my father would be so troubled over the absence of his wayward son. France has taken up the sword against England, and was it not always the motto of our house to be among the first to unsheathe a blade ?”

“But you know,” said I, “the Count le Mans has little sympathy with this struggle ; had France called forth your sword there had been reason for it.”

I spoke thus because resolved upon a favorable termination to my mission, and wishing that the youth, now a prisoner, should be induced to return to Paris. As to my own heart, it did not respond to the words, and with quick intuition Edouard perceived it.

“France has espoused the cause of the Colonies,” replied he ; “the lilies wave above Newport ; Lafayette——”

Tarleton turned quickly. "Young sir," quoth he sternly, "certain of your countrymen have, indeed, sought to wrest from England that which is her own. Perchance the thought of the Plains of Abraham, and Canada, lost forever to your King, may rankle in their memories."

The hot blood rushed to my face, for his words were an affront to France. Perceiving that I resented them his manner changed to one of grave courtesy. "It was the Briton who spoke, and not the host," said he; "the assertions of this boy are ill-placed." Then, to the Vicomte: "What would you, sir? M. de Marc has come hither to offer a return to France; will you avail yourself of it, and meddle no more in the affairs of England? Youthful rashness is soon cured."

For a moment Edouard hesitated; he was a prisoner, and the other's words opened a way to freedom; beside, he had not as yet openly taken up the cause of the patriots. I remained silent, awaiting anxiously his answer; perhaps he saw in my eyes an expectancy that the spirit of his race would assert itself, and it turned the scale.

"Sir," replied he haughtily, facing the British colonel of dragoons, "I am a prisoner, and in your power. The reason for my setting foot in America you well know; De Marc has told you. I cannot see why I should change my resolution."

A flash of admiration shone in Tarleton's eyes, but his voice was cold as steel as he replied: "There will be due caution taken, sir, that you trouble England little." Then, raising his voice, he summoned the commander of the prison. "The interview is finished," said he, "guard this Frenchman well, 'tis the order of his lordship."

"But, sir," cried I, "another word; I would——"

"Enough," replied he coldly, and motioned to the officer to conduct the Vicomte to his chamber.

"Now," said he, when we were once more alone, "your mission is ended, nor can your King hold you responsible for its failure."

I was filled with anxiety for the Vicomte's safety, but my heart swelled at the brave words he had uttered to one who was noted for his harshness to an enemy. If Tarleton shared my admiration it was concealed; with clouded brow he led the way from the building.

The scene about the prison had become more animated. Some soldiers were giving light with torches, some running in different directions carrying bags and bundles, loading them into carts and wagons, others leading horses from their stables, and a score of cattle were being driven from their stalls.

The gleam of the torches shone on the face of my companion showing the frown still upon his brow, and he spoke sharply to an officer who passed, leading a saddled horse—the favorite charger of Lord Cornwallis.

The words of two passing soldiers who carried between them a heavy parcel reached my ears.

"Are the Americans forming for an attack?" asked one, "or why this tumult?"

"I know nothing," replied the other, "but we are to march before sunrise; his lordship has ordered all to be in readiness."

Tarleton turned to me impatiently. "Come," said he, "we are expected at headquarters."

Turning to accompany him, I met face to face a man who was hurrying by—Major Brooks, of the Red House tavern.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SURRENDERING OF A SWORD.

IT was a mutual recognition ; and of the two I was the least surprised. It flashed across me that the Major's presence within the British lines was a natural sequence to his escape from Chester, and I wondered I had not thought of the probability of meeting him.

But on his part my appearance came as an astounding surprise. With amazement written on every line of his face, he stopped, stood still, and gazed up at me.

Tarleton, quick to note that which transpired about him, looked at the fellow sharply, for, being clad in civilian garb, the Major was to him but one of the many Tories, or lukewarm patriots, who thronged the town. The persistency of the other's gaze irritated him.

"Come, sir," cried he, "move on ! or if you have any business with this gentleman or myself, state it quickly and rid us of your presence."

Seeing that the speaker was a British officer, and evidently one in authority, the Major's face assumed a humble look. There seemed nothing in this man to warrant any feeling except contempt. Constant transitions from bad to worse ; one time renegade, then traitor, ruffian and murderer, and *now* cringing for favor at the feet of a British colonel of dragoons. Perhaps he read the scorn in my eyes, and it drove him to sudden boldness.

"Sir," replied he, advancing a step toward us, "I am known to Lord Cornwallis, and——"

"You make it an excuse to stare insolently at any you may chance to meet," cried Tarleton, whose temper, already ruffled by the scene in the commandant's chamber, was rapidly gaining the ascendancy. "I will teach you, sir, to——"

"The Frenchman will perhaps remember me," replied the other with affrontry, "if M. de Marc——"

Tarleton turned upon me like a flash. "What deviltry is this?" cried he, "do you know the man?"

"As a ruffian and murderer," I answered, surprised at the calmness in my voice, for I saw that from this conversation great danger to myself might follow.

"Sir," cried Brooks, a malignant hatred shining in his eyes, "his lordship will vouch for me; as to this spy——"

Already a dozen lookers-on had been drawn about us to learn the meaning of our loud words. Tarleton turned to his orderly: "Conduct this fellow to my quarters," said he, "if he attempts escape, run him through; I propose to probe this matter to the bottom."

With a sinking heart I followed him, trying to form as I went a plan of action. I saw much cautiousness would be required to thwart the Major's design. If, indeed, he was in the confidence of Lord Cornwallis, and I now strongly suspected him to be an authorized spy in the pay of the British, it would go hard with me, nor could I look to Tarleton for assistance if his suspicions were once awakened.

Reaching his quarters, he led the way, Brooks

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following, to the chamber we had left earlier in the evening, and commanded the orderly to station himself without. Then closing the door turned to us.

"To the point, sir," said he, fixing his eyes upon Brooks's face, "what is your business in Charlotte, and from where do you come?"

"Lord Cornwallis can——" began the renegade.

"Lord Cornwallis is not here," replied Tarleton sharply, "it is to me you must answer, and with despatch."

The Major's hand went to his mustache, as for a moment he hesitated. An impatient movement on the part of his interrogator warned him that the officer was fast losing patience.

"Sir," said he, "his lordship has done me the honor to make such use of my services as would best——"

"Zounds!" cried Tarleton, his eyes flashing, "his lordship, his lordship; I care nothing about your services; why are you here?"

"I have followed this spy from Chester," replied Brooks boldly, "where I was sent to discover——"

At his words, spoken with an intonation of triumph, the blood surged to my head in an angry torrent; passion mastered me; I forgot my position as a gentleman, and sprang forward, dealing the traitor a stinging blow across the face, then realizing what I had done, drew back in confusion.

The Colonel, rendered speechless by so unexpected a development, looked at me in amazement; Brooks staggered backward and raised his hand to his lips from whence the blood was trickling. Shame overcame me that I had so easily given way to temper.

"Sir," cried I, turning to Tarleton, "I did indeed forget myself, but the lie——"

"Enough, sir," said he sternly, "anger overcame prudence," and he laid a hand upon his sword-hilt thinking, perchance, the other would resent the blow. He did, in truth, seek his pocket where was a pistol, but the stout figure of the officer standing between us checked the impulse.

"You shall answer," cried he; "neither Marion or his hirelings shall protect you."

Calmness returned to me and I replied nothing. Tarleton continued: "You speak of Marion, what then?"

His eyes never left my face as Brooks related the meeting in Red House tavern, my subsequent departure for King's Mountain in company with the Americans, and my reappearance at the cabin in the forest with General Marion. Of Mistress Bourmont he made no mention, touching only upon those points which suited his purpose, and would condemn me in the eyes of a British officer.

During the recital, given with all the cunning the man possessed, the features of Tarleton told me nothing, but when the other finished, his question had the cold ring of steel.

"And you, sir?"

I saw my case was desperate, but with forced calmness replied, acknowledging my presence at Red House in company with Clark and McDowell, related the coming of Mistress Bourmont, her errand in the south, and the subsequent actions of Major Brooks.

"Sir," said I, "you are a soldier and an English gentleman, and know it is not their purpose to make war on helpless women; that is left to ruffians and murderers."

"And King's Mountain?" said he shortly.

"I was there as a non-combatant," I replied.

"But at the cabin?" asked he coldly.

"It was to rescue a maid beset by ruffians, and did not touch upon the conflict."

"M. de Marc," said he slowly, but with no evidence of unfriendliness in his tone, "I do not accept altogether the words of one whom you have much cause to consider your enemy. Yet, having overstepped the bounds of prudence, your position is most equivocal. It is my duty to declare you a prisoner."

A gleam of triumph crossed the face of my traducer; the Colonel turned upon him:

"And you, sir, while I return thanks on behalf of Lord Cornwallis for warning us against one whose actions necessitate severity, may go upon your way. Under other circumstances I should advise M. de Marc to repeat the blow he gave you, and to which you replied like a coward and a poltroon; 'tis such as you who cast discredit upon the King's arms. Enough—go!"

The smile of triumph faded from the renegade's eyes, giving place to a sickly pallor, which bespoke an inward wrath he did not dare to give vent to, for, like others of his kind, he sought to play the puppet to the English officers.

"Your excellency," he stammered, "if the vile lies of yonder spy—"

"Go, sir!" thundered Tarleton, the ring of contempt in his voice cutting the other like a lash. "Mistress Bourmont is known to me through a brother officer now fighting for the King; he may hold you to an accounting for your insults to her if you escape the just wrath of M. de Marc."

The words astounded me, and explained in part his action. I had heard at Bourmont House of one among the British officers who sought Constance's

hand ; therefore Tarleton, in dealing these blows to her assailant, defended the honor of a brother in arms. Brooks had shot his arrow, but the force of the bow rebounded upon himself. Perhaps he felt it would have been better had he left me in peace, nor crossed the path of one as inexorable as the colonel of dragoons. Abased and cowering under the other's words, he crept from the chamber into the darkness without.

For a moment silence pervaded the room, then Tarleton addressed me : "The fellow is a coward ; a poltroon ! but it is impossible to pass lightly over his assertions. As a soldier, M. de Marc, you comprehend my duty, yet"—and a shadow of regret was in his voice—"I would it were otherwise, and that you might be permitted to pursue your way with freedom. We march within the hour, and Lord Cornwallis must decide upon this matter."

"Sir," replied I, "time will justify me ; but one request I make."

"Name it," said he, "and if consistent with my duty as an English officer, it will be freely granted."

"That I may share the captivity of the Vicomte."

He thought for a moment. "You have my permission, and now—" his eyes sought my sword.

With a feeling more of sorrow than anger, I loosed the buckle, and laid the blade upon the table.

"Colonel Tarleton," said I, my voice trembling, despite the efforts at self-control, "it has been drawn for France ; if courtesy to a prisoner—"

"I promise to care for it," replied he, "that, at least, is permitted me."

Filled with conflicting emotions, I watched him walk toward the door and utter a few sentences to those without. After a moment, on crossing the

threshold, there were two grenadiers awaiting to conduct me to my place among the other prisoners. Turning, I bowed courteously to Colonel Tarleton, who stood beside the table, his hand resting lightly upon my father's sword.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE ROAD TO WINNSBOROUGH.

THE battle of King's Mountain had been a heavy blow to the English commander. Hastening from Charlotte under the cover of night, his march bore more the aspect of a retreat than the advance of a victorious army.

Scarcely an hour had elapsed subsequent to my departure as a prisoner from the quarters of Colonel Tarleton, when I, with others, was hurried from the prison, closely guarded by a file of grenadiers.

The Vicomte's surprise upon seeing me for the second time that night was extreme ; a few words explained my position as a prisoner, held at the pleasure of Lord Cornwallis. Despite the gravity of the situation, Edouard burst into a laugh, then said :

“ So this is the ending of your mission, you, who talked of drawing the sword for France alone, who frowned at the name of Lafayette and sat at table with a British colonel.”

His levity jarred upon me, cast down as I was by the unfortunate incidents of the night. Perceiving my mood, he laid his hand affectionately upon my shoulder.

“ But it was not your heart that spoke, Henri ; you too, I am sure, lean toward the cause of liberty.”

My ill-temper vanished before the caress, so long it was since I had received one from him.

"After accomplishing my mission I purposed offering my sword to General Washington," said I, and then related what had befallen since my arrival in America.

"You have seen Lafayette and General Marion," cried he, "and been in battle!"

"I thought to find you on the Hudson," said I, "or at Newport; what is the meaning—"

"I sought General Marion," he answered; "at his side was the life which most attracted me. Arriving in Philadelphia, I learned much concerning him, and, with M. de Biart, hastened southward."

"To fall into the hands of Lord Cornwallis," replied I, drily; "you were always inclined to rashness, Edouard."

"Perhaps," said he, with mock gallantry, "as are certain others, who—" then, carried away by his youthful impulses: "but it was my fault; to find me you became a prisoner. Forgive me, Henri?"

He read the answer in my eyes, and threw his arms about me, to the astonishment of half a dozen Americans who, unfamiliar with the demonstrative French manner, watched us curiously.

"Come," said I, "'tis nothing; but M. de Biart?"

"They separated us," cried he, his eyes flashing; "these Englishmen, who feared the cunning of two Frenchmen. He is in another room, swearing, I warrant, as is his custom."

The appearance at the door of the commandant of the prison precluded further conversation. His errand was to order us below to accompany the army.

This relieved somewhat the tension of my nerves. In a hurried march Lord Cornwallis would hardly find opportunity to pass upon the accusations made

against me, and, though Tarleton had spoken with mildness, the fate of André, caught within the enemy's lines, was fresh in my memory. That I was free from all intentions which constituted a spy, I knew, but would Cornwallis dismiss the suspicion awakened in his mind by Major Brooks's recital?

Outside the prison all was confusion. Horsemen rode hither and thither, striking with the flat of their swords dismounted men, urging them into line, which was no sooner formed than the approach of a heavily-loaded cart threw into fresh disorder. The rumble of cannon dragged over uneven places, the cries of the teamsters, and curses of soldiers huddled together in the road came to us from out the darkness, rendered more gloomy by the flare of scores of torches held above the heads of those who bore them. Edouard shrugged his shoulders.

"Indeed it seems like a retreat," said he, "an army flying before a phantom. If the Americans came suddenly upon this rabble we should no longer be prisoners."

However, discipline rapidly gained the ascendancy. A long line of wagons moved off toward the outskirts of the town. Companies and battalions, whipped into place by their officers, filed past us, their arms and buckles gleaming in the torchlight. The roll of drums sounded through the night, to be answered by the blare of bugles from Tarleton's squadron. An officer approached us as we were gathered before the entrance of the prison.

"Sir," said he, addressing me, "it is Colonel Tarleton's command that you use the horse which brought you here."

A detail of grenadiers, one of whom held the

animal by the bridle, appeared from around the corner of the building. Obedient to order, the prisoners formed into line, flanked on every side by red-coated soldiery, and, moving to the place reserved for us, we were swept away in the human torrent which filled the road. The Vicomte kept close at my side, one hand resting carelessly upon the horse's mane; an amused smile played about the corners of his mouth, but the Americans cast upon me sullen glances. They suspected Tarleton's kindness, and I did not understand it.

Within the hour Charlotte lay behind us, for, refreshed by their days of inactivity, the soldiers moved at a brisk rate over the winding road which led southward. But as the long hours passed and lengthened into days, a different spirit came upon the marching host. About noon on the day following our departure from Charlotte, a cold, cheerless rain set in, which after a time turned the dusty road into a quagmire, a river of mud, which clung to the feet of the moving hundreds, blocked the wheels of the carts and wagons, and mired the heavy cannon.

Murmurs of discontent arose about me, mingled with oaths and imprecations against Cornwallis; being mounted, I escaped somewhat the discomfort of those on foot, who sank at each step into holes filled with water, or slipped helplessly upon the oozing clay. Several times I offered my seat to the Vicomte, but in vain; he only said:

"I brought you here. But for me you would be safe in France, or at the headquarters of General Washington."

Before long an opportunity presented itself for dispelling the sullen glances of my fellow-prisoners. One of the Americans, a young lieutenant of dra-

goons, weak from a wound received at Camden, sank by the roadside, unmindful of the rough order from his captors to move forward.

Addressing the officer in command, I requested that the unfortunate youth be mounted in my place, to which, after some hesitation, the Englishman gave consent. Henceforth the Americans looked on me more kindly and I found much diversion in their conversation.

As the days passed, it required small perception to see that the movement of the British had been forced upon them by necessity, otherwise Cornwallis would have returned to Charlotte, or quartered himself in one of the many towns lying along the route.

On the fifth day the condition of the troops became deplorable. With no tents to shelter them, they encamped at night beside the muddy road, spreading their blankets on the water-soaked earth without lights or fire. Each morning many were added to the sick and fever-stricken; the wagons were crowded with cursing wretches, too weak to make their way on foot; without rest, and tormented by cold and sleeplessness, they cared little for what might overtake them. Rivers were to be crossed, and these, swelled by incessant rains to raging torrents, were forded with difficulty; twenty wagons loaded with provisions were lost, swept away by the waters or sunk hopelessly in the quagmires. Famine stared Lord Cornwallis in the face; the country through which we passed afforded scant provision save fields of Indian corn, which the soldiers gathered and devoured eagerly.

Nor did the inhabitants of the districts through which the army passed leave it to the mercy of inclement elements, and the ravages of nature. By

day and by night bands of yeomen hovered upon the flanks of the dispirited soldiers. Not like men, but swarms of vicious insects, they beset the British, firing upon them from behind trees and the shelter of rocks and hillocks. Sometimes singly, often in parties of ten or a dozen the outraged Americans crept upon the red-coats, slaying without pity many among the struggling mass. At night the camp became a place of terror; sentinels fell pierced by hostile bullets; the lighting of a camp-fire was the signal for a rain of balls sent by unseen hands. Frequently soldiers shivering about it met the angel of death speeding out of the darkness. Ofttimes it was scattered to splinters, and those who sought its warmth fled panic-stricken to wander through the night, chilled, hungry and frightened. No sooner was a spark ignited than an officer cried: "Put out the light!" and his soldiers crouched in the darkness.

Neither in the day was there any safety. Men from the forests, and the fields, hid in the woods, formed ambushes in the road, and galled the plodding troops beyond endurance. Infantry and artillery mingling together, fled at random in all directions, filled with alarm and terror. But if certain of the British rode in advance, musket in hand, looking carefully on every side, halting and listening, there was no enemy to be found.

From time to time horsemen appeared upon the horizon, and the red lines drew up as though for battle; then those who hovered in the distance disappeared as if by magic, to rise again further on. At such times consternation reigned in the regiments, not knowing what to do, but they flowed on in silence, the red flag trembling above the heads of soldiers.

In the midst of this danger and tumult, we, the prisoners, crowded together, weary, hungry and disconsolate. Unused to the rigors of so detestable a climate, I suffered severely, but, covered with mire, soaked to the skin and like at any moment to be struck down by a bullet, I fared no worse than my captors—the proud army which had defeated Gates at Camden, and swept the Americans from the Carolinas.

CHAPTER XIX.

CLARK, OF THE REGULARS.

THE march southward dragged on through weary days and nights. On the tenth, word reached us that Lord Cornwallis, stricken with fever, had given the command to Lord Rawdon, and was being carried forward in a wagon. The condition of his lordship necessitated a halt of two days at a hamlet known as the Catawba settlement ; there the worn-out soldiers rested, and obtained provisions ; a line of sentinels being thrown out, sleep was possible, for the Americans dared not approach too near the town.

Soon after taking up the march, Tarleton appeared suddenly before the prisoners. During the preceding days I had seen him frequently, but at a distance ; his dragoons formed the van of the army, and, although seeming to be everywhere, he studiously avoided our section of the line.

Sitting upon his horse, his keen eyes sought me out, and a grim smile crossed the sternness of his face as they met mine. I presented a sorry sight after the trying tramp through the mud of the Carolinas ; he sat stiff and immaculate, though the hardships through which he had passed were written on his countenance. Motioning me to approach he bent in his saddle and viewed me critically.

“ Why were not my orders obeyed ? ” asked he ;

"on horseback you would not have fallen into such a plight, M. de Marc."

I replied that my horse had been returned to me, but one among the prisoners being ill, I had placed it at his disposal.

He shrugged his shoulders. "It was wasted kindness," said he; "these rebels have small appreciation. We march in an hour, and I would advise you, sir, to look more carefully to yourself."

He wheeled his horse suddenly and cantered off, followed by the gaze of those about me. Later, I was to see him in another light.

At noon we resumed the march, much refreshed by our halt at Catawba. Being well into South Carolina I surmised that ere long Lord Rawdon would lead the troops into quarters, and, as the roads were better, and the Americans left the troops in peace, we proceeded more rapidly.

Just at this time the Vicomte spoke to me on a subject about which he had given much thought. That we should seize a favorable opportunity and attempt an escape from captivity.

"I do not know whither we are bound," said he, "but once in permanent quarters, it will be less possible."

I told him the thought had also occurred to me, but, as we were closely guarded, and weakened by privation, I saw little chance of accomplishing so rash a venture.

"It has been whispered among the Americans," said he, "and some look upon it favorably. We are passing through a country hostile to our captors; once clear of them we certainly might look for help."

I promised to consider the matter carefully, and try to form some plan by which, if opportunity

offered, we might be successful, but as we were always under the watchful eyes of the guards, the undertaking seemed most foolhardy. Marion's words occurred to me, and the reason which had hastened his departure from Chester ; to devise a plan whereby, if the American prisoners were conducted under guard to the sea-coast, he might rescue them. For a moment a wild hope flashed through my mind, but I dismissed it as one beyond realization ; not a score, or less, of English soldiers guarded us, but Cornwallis's army. Against it even Marion would be powerless.

Thus a day passed bringing us nearer to our destination and to what I dreaded, the sifting of Major Brooks's recital in regard to my presence at King's Mountain and at Chester.

On the night of the twenty-seventh of October, rumor reached me that it was the purpose of the commander to terminate the march at Winnsborough, a place near Camden. Worn out by ceaseless tramping over the rough roads, I welcomed with a sigh of relief the arrival at the night's camping place, and after partaking of the meager meal which the guard set before me, lay down under the shelter of a tree.

How long I slept I know not, it must have been close to daylight, for when I opened my eyes the darkness had given place to an uncertain grayness, heralding the approach of dawn. Overcome with drowsiness I would have closed my eyes again, but the hand of the Vicomte, who lay next me, pulled gently at my blanket.

"Henri," he whispered, and the words scarcely reached my ear, "I have decided ; death is preferable to long weeks of imprisonment, and to-morrow it will be too late."

In an instant I gained my full senses. His tone told of a fixed resolve ; a determination to make a break for liberty, though a British musket-ball might be the ending.

" De Biart and three others," he whispered ; " perhaps some may escape in the confusion."

Raising my head slightly I made a rapid survey of the situation. We were encamped in a belt of woodland extending for many rods along the roadside ; a sluggish creek flowed near us, separating our resting-place from the main body of the army which lay on the southern side. Our place was at the rear of the marching line, and toward the north were the wagons and artillery, guarded by a regiment of grenadiers and Hessians, who, with our guards, constituted the tail of the army. A sentinel, leaning sleepily upon his musket, stood twenty paces from where we lay, further on a second, then a third and fourth ; one on each side ; at the north, west, and east, and by the creek. Beyond the grove, which separated it from the road, stretched a broken country, studded with rocks and hillocks. This I had observed on the previous evening, but now the landscape was hidden by a wavering darkness.

Edouard watched my examination with anxious eyes, for he eagerly wished that I too should make a dash for freedom.

" De Biart thinks this is the time," he whispered ; " shortly after sundown he heard the sentries speak of horsemen upon the hills, and Blanchford " (one of Marion's dragoons who was among the prisoners) " noted the cry of a night hawk ; he said it was a signal used by Marion's men."

Again the thought of the intrepid American flashed through my mind. When he had spoken

of journeying eastward he knew nothing of the retrograde march of Lord Cornwallis ; was it not possible that he had followed in the track of the army ?

This thought quickened the resolution already half formed. If others attempted to regain their liberty I would not remain behind. The Vicomte read my decision, and rapidly imparted the plan formed by De Biart and the Americans who were resolved to undertake the venture.

De Biart, who lay nearest the sentinel to the east, would approach him with some plausible excuse for leaving his bed upon the ground, then, seizing the opportunity to strike him down, escape before any knew of his intention. We were to follow, trusting to the surprise and consternation of the remaining sentinels to reach the open country beyond, when each would be obliged to look after his own welfare.

It was a simple plan, quickly formed, and full of danger, for the sentries would speedily find their wits, the camp be aroused, and some, perhaps all of us, be shot down or overtaken. Yet there appeared no other way, and there was a chance that some among us might escape to the friendly shelter of the hills, and the protection of the Americans.

By a secret signal the Vicomte made known my willingness to join the others. Five minutes passed ; moments fraught with anxiety and strained impatience. The sentinel who was to be the object of De Biart's attack stood motionless, like a figure of stone, the scarlet of his uniform showing a dull color in the fitful gleam of the half-dead camp-fire. With beating heart and nerves racked with expectancy I waited ; would De Biart never start ? Had the Vicomte's words been but a dream ?

Suddenly I saw my countryman move uneasily, throw out his arms and rise to a sitting posture ; in another moment he would approach the sentinel. But, even as he was in the act of stumbling to his feet, and the red-coat hearing him turned quickly, from out the darkness burst a flash of fire, and the crack of a rifle resounded through the stillness. Without a cry, scarcely moving, the sentry tottered and fell, his nerveless fingers clutching at the grass ; in the same moment De Biart sprang upright and made his run for liberty.

At the report a score of soldiers leaped from their blankets reaching for their guns. But we, who had waited in breathless eagerness for a signal, were before them, upon our feet, following the retreating form of M. de Biart.

A cry arose from the now thoroughly awakened soldiers ; a sentinel discharged his musket, another, and a third. One of my companions threw up his arms and fell, but his death was speedily avenged ; a dozen rifles flashed from out the darkness and half as many red-coats rolled upon the ground.

The Vicomte ran panting at my elbow, urging me on as though the crackling shots behind lent no lightness to my feet.

A medley of cries, commands and discordant shouts arose from the camp ; then the deep roar of a volley fired by those whom discipline had drawn into line. A cloud of humming bullets whistled past my ears ; one who ran before me dropped, but it was evident the grenadiers aimed too high ; had it not been so Edouard and I would have gone no further for liberty.

For a moment none followed us, for the flashes of the American rifles dotted the hillsides beyond the camp. We were between two fires, plunging

recklessly ahead in the semi-darkness, not knowing but rifle-bullet or musket-ball might bring us down. Perhaps those who harassed the enemy saw in our mad dash the escape of prisoners ; they must have known in some way what took place about the British camp-fire, or a Providence turned aside their bullets and permitted us to pass in safety.

Staggering forward, with the Vicomte close behind, I discerned just before me a tall form, who, having discharged his piece, was feeling for the powder-flask. At the same moment, seeing me, his hand went to his belt.

I know not what I cried, but at my words he started forward with an exclamation, the next instant was upon me—Sergeant Clark of the regulars.

I knew little of what followed ; my heart was beating like a battering-ram, my head dizzy and near to bursting ; nothing but the sound of firing rang in my ears. The voice of Clark, and the pressure of the Vicomte's hand upon my shoulder, brought me to my senses.

“Sir,” cried the ranger, “a little further ! the hive has been awakened and the wasps are about to show their stings.”

As he spoke the shrill blare of a bugle came from the British camp, and a second discharge of firearms. Day was breaking in the sky, and through the wavering light I could make out the indistinct movements of those below. Bodies of red-coated soldiery were forming into line, mounted men rode madly among them, and in the road were gathering a mass of horsemen : Tarleton's dragoons.

“Come,” said Clark sharply, “it is their purpose to send out cavalry, and our force cannot withstand them. To the woods, that we may not be overtaken.”

It was even as he said. The bright-colored British dragoons began to pour into the level tract which separated the elevation upon which we stood from the camp, and with drawn sabers were advancing toward us.

Hastening with Clark and the Vicomte to the forest which lay behind the ridge of the hill, I saw a score or more of Americans going also. Having aroused the British, they did not wait for their coming, being too few in number to contend against them. The dragoons reaching the summit of the elevation and perceiving no one, did not venture further, but returned to the main body, who, later, resumed the march toward Winnsborough.

The Americans, and especially Clark, who seemed to be their leader, received us with much satisfaction. Our plan to escape was, of course, not known to them ; Clark's hand unwittingly fired the shot which was the signal for De Biart's dash for liberty. He failed in the venture which he had planned, for he was not among those who joined us beneath the shade of the forest, but whether dead, or again a prisoner, I knew not at that time.

The ranger's explanation of his presence was simple. Instead of returning to Chester he had remained near the spot where he left me, and thus knew of Cornwallis's march from Charlotte. Whether I was held a prisoner, or remained with the British at my own volition in order to aid the Vicomte, he could but surmise ; the former seemed the most probable. In company with other patriots, varying in numbers, he hovered upon the flank of the enemy by day and night ; chance alone brought about our meeting, although he told me he had the hope that in some manner I would again rejoin him.

"And General Marion?" I asked.

"I have not heard," said he, "or of McDowell."

"Cornwallis goes to Winnsborough," said I, "perhaps—"

"It is close to Camden," cried he, "and Mistress Bourmont is there."

"And Major Brooks is with the British," I answered.

An expression of alarm appeared in his eyes. "Our duty is clear," said he, "we must forestall these red-coats and take her to a place of safety. If Brooks—"

"He will scarcely harm her," I replied, and related the scene at Tarleton's quarters.

"'Tis no guaranty of safety for the maid," he replied, "I little trust this Tarleton, and beside he may be ordered eastward to contend with General Marion. Come, horses await us near by; we will, if you have recovered sufficiently from your fatigue, hasten to Camden."

The Vicomte approached me. "Henri," said he, "I will go also, for I must disobey my father and even the King. I shall not return to France."

Words were useless; his purpose was unchangeable, nor was I over cast down at the failure of my mission. Having fulfilled it, and delivered M. le Comte's message to the Vicomte, I was free to follow my own inclinations. Clark smiled gravely at the boy's impetuosity. It may be he was reminded of Lafayette.

CHAPTER XX.

A MAID OF THE COLONIES.

AT midnight we arrived in Camden. The town seemed buried in slumber, except that here and there lights twinkled from windows showing some were watching, perhaps over the wounded and sick, or performing delayed tasks. It was a new place to us all, but we came upon an inn and found several persons busy with their horses in the yard.

These proved to be a party of countrymen, who, having ridden into town during the day, were preparing to return to their homes in the outlying districts. From them we learned that several Americans who had been wounded in the battle with Cornwallis, were quartered in a building quite near the tavern, but they knew nothing of those who attended them. We had ridden rapidly, there seemed no probability of danger from the British, therefore Clark suggested that, being so weary, the hour late, and Mistress Bourmont of course in her bed for the night, we retire to the inn and rest until morning.

I arose at daybreak, and leaving the Vicomte still asleep went outside. Clark was before me; I found him in conversation with the owner of the house. From his grave manner I saw something had disturbed him, and on inquiring the cause, he said:

“We have bad news; Captain Bourmont died at sunset.”

This was so unexpected, it came like a blow, and for a moment I could reply nothing.

"Until yesterday all looked for his recovery," continued the ranger, "but the wound opened afresh and he passed away while his sister was beside him."

"And what of Mistress Bourmont?" I asked.

"She has borne up bravely," replied the landlord, "but, if you are her friends, your coming is most fortunate. She is alone, save for certain ones of the town."

"But McDowell?" I asked, "is he not here?"

"He went north to join General Marion," replied the man; "the girl would have it so."

"Come," said I to Clark, "let us go to the house at once."

Directed by the landlord, we approached the building and knocked softly upon the door. After some moments of silence the bolts were drawn, and a sleepy-eyed man confronted us.

"We have ridden in haste to Camden," said I, "and seek Mistress Bourmont."

He drew aside, motioning us to enter. "In there!" said he, pointing to a door a few feet from us; "she has not slept since yesterday."

"Go!" interrupted Clark, "I will wait for you." With quick perception he felt that in her sorrow Constance might wish to be alone with me.

Scarcely realizing the meaning of his action, I tapped gently upon the panel, then pushed open the door, and entered. The room was dark save for the gray light which struggled through a curtained window. Dimly I made out the shrouded form upon the bed, and the bowed figure seated at its head.

At the opening of the door the girl half turned,

but perhaps thinking it to be the man who admitted us, and had shared her sleepless vigil, she lowered her eyes again, and a stifled sob reached my ear. The evidence of her sorrow showed me how strong was my love for her. Quickly crossing the room I stood beside her, and said: "Constance!"

Startled, she raised her head and regarded me for a moment in amazed silence. Then, overcome by irrepressible emotion, arose and held her hands toward me with a gesture of childlike helplessness.

"M. de Marc," she said, in a voice so low I scarce caught the words, "you have come at last, but it seemed as though I never was to see you again."

I resisted a strong impulse to clasp her in my arms and comfort her, but better judgment prevailed; even if I were more to her than a friend, this was not the moment for declaring love. But I took the outstretched hands in mine, holding her thus in mute sympathy until the first strength of my emotions passed.

"Mademoiselle," I said, "would to God that—"

"It was His will," interrupted she brokenly. "At the eleventh hour, but oh, Monsieur—"

A tired, frightened look stole into her eyes; the brave eyes which had faced danger so unflinchingly, and, moved by sympathy, mine grew moist also.

With a quick gasp her hands tightened convulsively. "But God is good," she said, "He has not left me alone."

"No," I replied, hardly knowing what to answer, "Sergeant Clark and I—"

At the ranger's name an eager look came into her face. "He knew *him*," she murmured, "how brave and kind he was, and—they have killed him."

"Clark is outside," I said, "I will send him to—"

"Not yet; not now, M. de Marc, I would—"

She checked the words, and turned her face away as though fearing to say too much, then lifted her eyes again, and spoke more bravely.

"I thank you and Sergeant Clark, Monsieur; your presence will make my heart less heavy." With a sudden movement she took her hands from mine and drew back the covering from the face of her dead. "And *he* would thank you too; it was but yesterday he spoke of you."

I looked down upon the features before me; the face, though wasted by sickness, was like her own; the brow broad and white, the mouth tender as a woman's.

"Until yesterday we thought to bring him back to health," she continued sorrowfully, "at parting Mr. McDowell promised to visit him at Bourmont House; even the doctor knew not the seriousness of the wound."

"Mademoiselle," replied I, seeking to say something which would show my appreciation of his loss to her, "your country could ill afford the death of Captain Bourmont; would that he might stand in my place, and—"

She raised her hand as though in gentle protest to the ending of my sentence, and said simply: "Many have fallen that America might be free, but others remain, Monsieur, to defend the Colonies."

"He cannot take my place," cried I, "but—if it be possible, I may fill in part that left vacant by his sacrifice; and you, you will pray for me, that—"

A faint flush came to her pale cheeks and for a moment she was silent, then said: "I thank you

for your noble words, Monsieur ; my country needs such swords as yours, and—I *will* pray for you."

I longed to have it in my power to comfort her in a manner more befitting the misfortune which had befallen. Perhaps she read the thoughts and sorrow for her, which lay heavy upon my heart. The first grief had benumbed her faculties, rendering her prostrated and helpless, but, through the long night of agony, calmness and strength in a measure returned ; an inherent braveness with which to face the sad realities. I dared to think that my coming meant something more than a protection from physical danger. In her first surprise she had greeted me almost affectionately, although with no words save one short sentence had she betrayed her sentiments.

A pause followed the promise of her prayers. The silence of the room, the presence of death, and emotions which filled my breast oppressed me. Suddenly she replaced the covering, and turned.

"Sergeant Clark is outside, you said, will you bid him enter, M. de Marc ?"

I hastened upon her errand and soon the tall form of the ranger crossed the threshold. Used to trying scenes upon the battle-field, he was unfamiliar with the softer touch of death, and paused irresolutely at the entrance of the darkened chamber. The low voice of Constance bade him welcome, and with hesitating steps he approached the bed.

"Captain Bourmont is gone," said he softly, the harshness of his voice giving place to a strange note of sympathy, "the lad was brave and a gallant soldier."

His words touched the maid more than wild lamentations or well-turned phrases could have done, for she knew, in his uncouth way, the woodsman

spoke from the heart. Her slender form trembled, and hiding her face in her hands she burst into a torrent of tears.

The rough hand of the ranger was laid tenderly upon her shoulder, and thus for a moment they stood, the maid struggling with her grief, the gray eyes of the patriot dimmed as had never been their wont.

“Come,” said he gently, “long hours of sleeplessness have wearied you; *he* would not wish you to be overcome.”

Obedient as a child, she permitted him to lead her from the room into the sunshine without; despite the sorrow, her spirit was uplifted, for she knew she was not alone.

I will not say much of the following day, when we laid to rest all that remained of Captain Bourmont. Afterward we told his sister about our sudden coming to Camden; that the British were close at hand, and to delay longer might bring fresh misfortune. She listened attentively, and said quietly, that now her brother needed her care no more, and she would accompany us to the north. I think during those hours the cheerfulness of the Vicomte did much to dispel her gloom, but I did not know until afterward that the most of his conversation with her was concerning me; my life in France, and those incidents which occurred at Charlotte and during the march of Cornwallis southward.

The van of the British army reached Winnsborough on the twenty-ninth of October; the morning of that day saw us in the saddle.

It was necessary, in order to avoid the scouting parties which Lord Rawdon was sure to send out, to make a wide detour toward the east, and we purposed to cross a stream called Lynch’s Creek;

from thence, hurry to the north, hoping to find General Marion in that neighborhood and join him. We were well mounted, and our progress was rapid. Mistress Bourmont, whose heart now turned to the east bank of the Hudson, fretted at each delay, scarcely willing to stop when night or the welfare of the horses necessitated such action. We, anxious for her safety, were nothing loath to reach the northern provinces as quickly as possible.

Not much worthy of note occurred during the days which elapsed between our leaving Camden and arrival in Philadelphia. We saw nothing of General Marion, though reports reached us that he was not idle, and had our course been more toward the east we must have found him.

At Philadelphia we tarried for a day, then pushed forward across New Jersey, reaching without mishap the camp of General Washington. I had left it an emissary of the Count le Mans and his Majesty of France, I returned to offer my services to the cause of liberty.

CHAPTER XXI.

AT GENERAL WASHINGTON'S HEADQUARTERS.

My welcome by Lafayette was such as one comrade gives another, nor was that accorded to the Vicomte le Mans of less cordiality, rather more in fact, for he had always been a favorite with the Marquis. To Clark also he spoke warmly, offering to use his influence to obtain a respite from duty in consideration of his noble service. To this the ranger replied shortly, saying he but wished to accompany Mistress Bourmont to the manor house, after which he desired to rejoin his company.

To the maid Lafayette spoke with much delicacy, offering sympathy with her sorrow for the death of her brother, whom, although never having seen, he knew well through reports from other officers.

"I am sure," said he, "that his Excellency would feel honored to have you call upon him and speak about the death of Captain Bourmont; it is to him a cause of sorrow."

Thus it happened that from her General Washington learned of my adventures in the south, and of my intention to join the American army. He conducted her with much gallantry back to the headquarters of Lafayette, where the Marquis, Edouard and I awaited her.

Upon perceiving me he extended his hand, saying: "Sir, it is with great pleasure I again wel-

come you to our midst ; your course in the south has done you honor. It is now doubtless your wish to accompany Mistress Bourmont to her family ; upon your return, will you do me the favor to dine with me at my headquarters ? ”

I bowed low ; words were inadequate to express my admiration for this noble gentleman.

“ Your Excellency,” said Lafayette, “ this is the Vicomte le Mans, whose coming to America brought M. de Marc hither.”

“ It is most gratifying to know you, sir,” replied the commander, “ the more so that you have reached us unharmed by adverse circumstances. It will please me if you join us also, upon M. de Marc’s return from Bourmont House.”

He bowed gravely and retired, leaving us to watch his tall figure as he moved off among the soldiers whom his genius was guiding to victory. The Vicomte expressed himself most enthusiastically.

“ It needs but a scepter and a crown to make him all a king,” said he.

“ He is more,” replied Lafayette, “ would that Europe could boast of such an one.”

Knowing that Constance was impatient to cross the river, I suggested we should leave without further delay, promising the Marquis to return on the morrow and relate to him such things as had befallen me in the Carolinas.

“ Think you to rid yourself of me so soon ? ” replied he gaily, and calling for his horse he sprang into the saddle and accompanied us to the ferry, riding by her side that he might talk with her about those at the manor. We left him upon the western bank, and for the remainder of the journey I kept my horse apace with the maid’s, the Vicomte and Clark bringing up the rear.

As we approached the manor house my companion grew more sad and quiet, knowing herself to be the bearer of unhappy news to those suffering intense anxiety at her absence, while still thinking that the son and brother lay sorely stricken beyond their care.

Suddenly she checked her horse and turning to me said with much agitation: "The Vicomte rides with us, M. de Marc, and they will think——"

I understood. Those within the house perceiving horsemen upon the road, and perhaps recognizing the three who had ridden southward, would think the fourth to be Captain Bourmont, recovered, and returning with his sister.

A word explained the situation to my companions; they reined in their horses, leaving the maid and me to approach the manor alone.

How different now from when I first rode under the tall elms which flanked the highway adjacent to the Bourmont homestead. Then I was a stranger, about to contend, for honor's sake, in behalf of those whom I had never seen, knowing only that they were women in distress; and now—

An exclamation from my companion startled me out of the reverie. The road which turned into the manor grounds was but a few rods before us, and upon it, advancing toward the highway, came a single horseman, who, perceiving us, gazed intently in our direction.

"It is my younger brother, Henry!" cried Mistress Bourmont, "the war has spared him to us, M. de Marc."

The youth who approached seemed about the Vicomte's age, of slender figure, clad in the uniform of an American officer. As we neared each other I noticed that his face, browned by exposure, re-

sembled more that of his younger sister Josephine than my companion. Suddenly he started, touched his horse with the spur and hastened toward us.

“Constance!” cried he, “thank God! and—Arthur?”

It needed no answer to tell him what had befallen in the south. The boyish gladness faded from his face, and he turned his eyes away that I, a stranger, might not note the tears.

“Henry,” said his sister gently, “this is M. de Marc, who—”

He raised his eyes quickly and extended his hand. “You are welcome,” said he, “and are scarce a stranger to Bourmont House; my mother has told me of you.”

Small need to relate what followed. How, with him, we rode slowly to the entrance of the manor; the joy of Madam Bourmont and her daughter turned so soon to sorrow. What passed between them in those first agonizing moments I do not know; I left them at the portal and crossed the park, walking slowly toward the highway, that I might meet Clark and the Vicomte who were approaching the gate. The former expressed satisfaction that Lieutenant Bourmont was with his family; he belonged, he said, to General Wayne’s command.

As we conversed, the youth joined us, extending a welcome to my companions, and begged us to accept his mother’s hospitality. Their grief was indeed great, but the war had taught American women to bear with fortitude their sufferings. Fearful lest our coming should be intrusive, and as Constance no longer needed protection, it seemed to me wise to return to Tappan. But to this Lieutenant Bourmont would not listen, avowing that

we were most welcome, and our presence would tend to cheer those within the house.

Madame Bourmont met me with much show of feeling, expressing her gratitude for what she chose to call the service I had rendered her daughter. I longed to tell her what lay nearest my heart, but delicacy forbade; her words precluded a declaration.

We remained beneath the hospitable roof until late the following morning. Answering the desires of Lieutenant and Madame Bourmont I related much which had befallen while in the Carolinas, and to my recital Clark and the Vicomte added their own. Thus the evening hours passed quickly, and midnight was approaching when we retired to rest; Clark, the Vicomte and I to sleep soundly, the others to bear in solitude their crushing sorrow.

I was not surprised that the sudden departure of Constance from her home had called forth no protestations on the part of her mother. Possessed of a keen sense of appreciation, the older woman comprehended the impulse which moved her daughter to action, and though it had caused her many hours of anxiety, the thought that her son had been comforted by his sister's presence, and breathed out his life in her arms, gave her only the keenest satisfaction.

On the arrival of the hour for our departure for the American camp, Lieutenant Bourmont made ready to accompany us to the ferry at Tarrytown, and our hostess exacted a promise that we should return whenever duty and inclination permitted. Constance raised her eyes to mine as we parted; it was the first separation since we met in Camden, and she seemed unwilling that I should go, but whether the manner arose from a feeling of

companionship and gratitude, or found its source in a more subtle reason I knew not, nor dared ask her.

We soon passed the distance between the manor house and Tappan, so that some hours before sunset I was again at Lafayette's headquarters.

"I am gratified," said he, after our first words of greeting, "that his Excellency is well pleased with you, and I think through the maid's recital you lost nothing."

"In some ways I aided her, which was a pleasure," I replied, "but another might have rendered better service, and in truth it is Clark who deserves the praise."

"Not any shall be taken from him," answered the Marquis, "but do you think, Henri, that soldiering has deprived me of perception? The girl is, indeed, fair, brave, and looks upon you as a hero. I fear for your peace of mind, sir."

"I have heard," said I, "that before the war a British officer——"

He made a gesture of protestation. "Mon Dieu!" he cried, "and they have slain her father and brother! Can you think so illy of the women of the Colonies, M. de Marc? Nothing of the kind would be possible! But now I bear a message from his Excellency. Learning you would return to-day, he sends an invitation to dine with him this evening; there will be General Greene, Mr. Hamilton and others. I have already accepted in your behalf, and also Edouard's. They will be much interested in your account of the southern trip, and in you; you—who have seen Cornwallis's army."

What remained of the afternoon passed quickly in conversation.

A little after sundown, at the hour named by

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General Washington, I went with the Marquis and Edouard to headquarters. The company had already gathered ; General Greene was joking with Mr. Hamilton, there were also Major Talmadge and a sturdy officer with slightly rounded shoulders, whom I learned was General Knox, the best artillery commander in the army.

His Excellency's greeting was courteous, and he introduced me to the several officers, I knowing none but Major Talmadge. After Washington, General Greene attracted me the most. He had been chosen by the commander-in-chief to succeed him should he be by death removed from the head of the army. Greene combined with those qualities possessed by a far-seeing officer, a most charming personality.

"His Excellency has told me," said he, extending his hand, "of your recent journey to the Carolinas ; it would please me if you would relate your impressions of the prevailing conditions there."

I did not know then that to him Washington had decided to confide the fortune of the Colonies in the south ; and but for the inaction of a stupid Congress, Greene, and not Gates, would have confronted Cornwallis at Camden, and it seemed to me the result been less fatal to the American arms.

We chatted until supper was announced, the General asking many questions about the condition of the country, the spirit of its people, and the characteristics of the British army. To these I replied readily, adding, that, being a foreigner, my opinion was perhaps of little value, yet given for what it was worth.

"Sir," said I, "another fortnight of hardships such as we experienced on the march from Char-

lotte to Winnsborough would deplete the force of Lord Cornwallis more than a dozen battles."

"The British have many resources," replied he, "which to us are impossible, but, were those who fight for liberty forced into similar conditions, they would suffer without a murmur."

A few months later his words were verified.

During the hours passed at the table, General Washington threw off some of the burden of care which rested upon his spirit. He loved good company, and it was his habit to sit long at table, sometimes speaking little, but listening attentively to the conversation about him ; he delighted in an anecdote or well-rendered song.

The night was far spent and candles had been replaced for the third time, when General Knox, lifting his glass, proposed a toast to France. Not to be outdone in courtesy, Lafayette, the Vicomte and I arose in our places to drink success to the Colonies. As toast followed toast, to the army, the ladies of the officers present, and to the undoing of the King's arms, I saw his Excellency whisper in the ear of Mr. Hamilton. The last response being given, the young officer arose, held aloft his glass and cried enthusiastically :

"Gentlemen, one thing more. Let us drink to the health of a new comrade in arms ; Captain de Marc !"

During the confusion which followed I sank back in my seat overcome with emotion. The Marquis had kept the secret well, for I learned later he had spoken on the subject to General Washington during my absence across the river.

The grave voice of our host drew every eye toward himself.

"And, gentlemen," said he, "it is with much

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pleasure I welcome Captain de Marc to our military brotherhood. I have this day sent to Congress papers, recommending they be straightway acted upon. It is the desire of the Marquis Lafayette that he be appointed on his staff." Then, turning to me: "To your health, sir!"

CHAPTER XXII.

AT BOURMONT HOUSE.

GENERAL LAFAYETTE at this time commanded a well-equipped and disciplined body composed of six battalions of infantry. My new duties were most congenial, and the ensuing weeks passed rapidly; through the kindness of the commander-in-chief the Vicomte received from Congress his commission as a sub-officer, and we were not separated.

Upon Lafayette's advice I addressed a letter to the Count le Mans, relating my experiences in America, the result of my mission, and the acceptance of a position upon the staff of the Marquis. Many months passed without a reply, and not until the close of the war did I know my patron's opinion of the course I had taken.

There was little save the routine of camp life to occupy our time. Once there appeared a probability of more active service; a movement told me by the Marquis, but unknown to most of the American officers.

Impatient at protracted inoccupation, he had proposed to his Excellency to make an attack upon Fort Washington, and the north end of the island of New York. A plan was formulated which promised success, and Lafayette himself was to lead the expedition; but the appearance of some of the enemy's warships in the lower Hudson rendered the scheme impracticable.

Again, one of my countrymen, the Marquis de Chastellux, whose troops were quartered in Rhode Island, paid his Excellency a visit. I had known him in France, and his presence created a diversion.

During those weeks I had the pleasure of being a frequent visitor at Bourmont House, where I was most cordially welcomed, and opportunity given to be much in the company of Mistress Constance. Those hours were full of happiness, but I shrank from giving utterance to my sentiments; having been of some slight service to the maid, I feared on that account I might seem to demand a return, but despite the care with which I guarded words and actions, the quick eye of Madame Bourmont read my heart. Had I known it, her continued kindness would have given me encouragement.

Although the army was to remain quiet through the winter, it happened that I was to find diverse employment. Congress, aroused at length to a realization of conditions in the south, turned to General Washington in its perplexity. Empowered to carry out those plans which had long been matured in his mind, the commander-in-chief appointed General Greene to fill the post ready to be vacated by the unfortunate and discouraged Gates, and he at once set about preparing for his journey to the Carolinas.

Near the ending of November I received a message from his Excellency to present myself at headquarters in company with Lafayette. We found him busily engaged with many papers, for the army was upon the point of going into winter quarters at West Point, Morristown, Pompton and Albany.

He greeted us cordially, and learning from the

Marquis certain details which required his attention, turned to me, saying gravely :

“ You know that General Greene is about to assume command of our troops in the south ; perhaps it will not be a surprise, that I wish you to accompany him.”

“ Your Excellency,” I replied, “ it is with a keen sense of appreciation of your kindness that I receive the command, though regretting much to no longer have the honor of serving near your person.”

He bowed an acknowledgment of the warm words. “ You do me too much honor, sir,” said he, and turned again to his papers, selecting one and handing it to the Marquis, saying : “ There is among your troops one Sergeant Clark, whom you have recommended as deserving recognition. It is with pleasure, my dear sir, that I place in your hands his commission from Congress as captain on the staff of General Greene.” Then, with a faint smile which lighted up for a moment his noble countenance : “ I doubt not my Lord Cornwallis will hear of these gentlemen before the coming of spring.”

Filled with enthusiasm I rode back to our quarters to relate my good fortune to the Vicomte. He declared that he would solicit Lafayette for permission to accompany me, but for once the Marquis turned a deaf ear to his entreaties.

“ Am I then to lose all my friends ? ” cried he. “ Mon Dieu ! M. le Vicomte ; those long winter evenings ! ”

I was granted the privilege of delivering in person the commission to Sergeant Clark. He received it with outward calmness, but the sparkle in his eyes revealed with what pleasure he contemplated a second journey southward ; the long days

of inactivity were little to his liking, and General Greene, he well knew, would carry on an aggressive campaign against the British.

The next day I presented myself to my commander, who received me cordially, saying at his request General Washington had assigned me to his staff.

"You may again meet this Tarleton," said he, "and call him to an account for the sword entrusted to his care."

Learning that my services would not be required until the eve of his departure for the south, I found there remained time for a last visit to Bourmont House, whither I rode, accompanied by the Vicomte. It was toward evening when we reached our destination, and the different members of the family were assembled in conversation; the Lieutenant was to rejoin his command the following day, and although he went but to Morristown, their hearts were heavy at thought of parting.

"But Captain de Marc will visit you often," interposed the young man in reply to a protestation, "also the Vicomte, and with two such good friends there need be little loneliness."

"It will indeed be a pleasure," replied Edouard, "nor shall I stand upon ceremony in coming; Henri will be gone——"

For a moment it was thought he referred to the brother, but he added quickly: "he is most fortunate; General Greene will scarcely remain in idleness."

Constance raised her eyes, but it was Madame Bourmont who replied to the Vicomte's words.

"General Greene goes to the Carolinas. Is it possible M. de Marc is to accompany him?"

I answered by relating the conversation with

Washington, adding, that as before, Clark would accompany us.

The intelligence was received with varied emotions. Lieutenant Bourmont hastened to congratulate me; a look of regret crossed the faces of his mother and Josephine, while the eyes of Constance, which had been upraised to mine, sought the floor.

"I had not thought that you would so soon leave us," said Madame Bourmont gravely, "but I consider you most fortunate; did you not possess the confidence of General Washington the post would scarcely have been assigned you."

"And you will seek revenge on this Lord Cornwallis," cried Josephine; "it was he who imprisoned you."

For a moment silence followed, then I turned to Constance and said: "Mistress Bourmont, you alone have not wished me 'God speed.'"

"It is needless," replied she softly, "yet I am glad; there the country needs its stoutest defenders."

Her face belied her words; perhaps mention of the Carolinas brought again the thought of her own journey thither, and its sad ending.

She remained seated for a little time, but joined no more in the conversation. My mind was distracted, and I could but watch her.

Suddenly she arose with a faintly uttered excuse, and left the room, a moment later passed the window, and her steps sounded on the gravel outside.

"Madame," said I, unable to longer restrain my emotion, "with your permission—" and I followed the maid.

She turned sharply upon hearing my approach, then resumed her walk toward the outskirts of the park.

"Constance!" cried I, "I am indeed bold, but the night is chilly, and this cloak——" I proffered mine, which I had snatched from the hall as I passed out.

She stopped, a faint smile flitting across her face. "I thank you, Monsieur," she replied, "you know I am strong. The heat of the room——" but she permitted the cloak to be placed about her.

"I have grieved you," said I, boldly. "I did not know——"

She raised her eyes quickly. "'Tis nothing, sir, —the memory!"

"Come," said I, and as we walked on side by side, "Constance, remember you promised to pray for me?"

She lifted her face half proudly. "Did you think I would forget so soon?" she answered.

"I shall see General Marion and—McDowell," I said at random, scarcely finding any words in my agitation. Never at the court of Louis had I been embarrassed, but in the presence of this simple maid utterance was most difficult. She answered nothing, and I continued: "And, God granting, certain ones shall answer to me."

With a pained look she murmured: "There will be danger, and wounds, and death; yet you would court it, Monsieur. Let us forget——"

"I cannot!" cried I, "for every hour of your agony I would have a recompense!"

Her voice was very grave as she replied: "'Tis past, Monsieur; the country needs your services, and——" holding out her hand, "you will promise me?"

"I will obey you always," I cried, seizing her hand; "for my love——"

By the dim, uncertain light I saw a faint flush arise to her cheeks, and the hand I held trembled.

"M. de Marc," said she softly, "not now."

"Ah!" cried I, plunging on, I cared not whither; "this is the only time, to-morrow—let me tell—"

"Stop," she whispered. "I am honored, M. de Marc, but you must not—"

I misjudged her words, and cried passionately: "I have heard; Clark told me—another—"

She snatched her hand away. "Monsieur," she said, half coldly, "report, it seems, has carried many things; you have no right to question me."

My heart turned sick as I stood motionless in the cold November night, thinking all was lost through my headstrong rashness. Something in my attitude of deep dejection touched her, and she came to my side, resting softly a hand upon my shoulder.

"M. de Marc," said she gently, "it is a poor return for your devotion, but indeed you must not question me."

"Mademoiselle," I replied in a strange, dull tone which brought a shadow of pain to her face, "I know I have no right, nor do I understand myself, but—I had dreamed, and the awakening—*Mon Dieu!*"

In an instant her manner changed to one of tenderness. "I cannot bear it," she cried, "would that I could answer you, but—but I will pray that you return to us."

Her words kindled a sudden flame of hope in my heart, and turning quickly, I caught her hands. "Constance," I cried, "you have not said *no!*"

Again the flush overspread her brow, and she smiled, though faintly. "I have neither answered yes or no, Henri!"

She had spoken my name, and, overcome by emotion, I bent and kissed her. "You know I was to take, in part, *his* place," said I softly, "and I would keep this remembrance with me."

She trembled for a moment, but her hands remained in mine, and she looked into my face.

"Some time I will come to you again," I whispered, "and will it then be no?"

A soft tenderness stole into her eyes; she released her hands and gathered the cloak about her.

"It is cold, Monsieur," said she; "let us return; they are waiting."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE BATTLE OF THE COWPENS.

ONCE more I was in the Carolinas, at Charlotte. How familiar it seemed! The house used by Cornwallis as his headquarters, but now occupied by General Greene; the dwelling wherein I had dined with Tarleton on that memorable evening, the prison, the long street through which had drifted the scarlet-clad lines. The second of December marked our entrance into the town, for General Gates had occupied it with the remnant of his army upon the retreat of the British to Winnsborough.

It was truly a sorry following which the new commander found awaiting him. Discouraged and disorganized by their defeat at Camden, scantily clothed and poorly fed, the soldiers were loose and disorderly; an army of some twenty-three hundred men, made up of militia, regulars and horseless dragoons.

I was not present at the meeting between Generals Greene and Gates, the former cool-headed, hopeful and energetic, the other depressed by his reverses and the death of an only son. I was told he met his successor half defiantly, seeing in him one whose coming to Charlotte but added to the stain upon his reputation as a soldier, and also of the delicacy with which Greene relieved him of the command, turning his coldness into gratitude.

The first care of the new commander was to re-organize the dispirited army. Gates had caused to be erected huts, expecting to remain inactive during the approaching winter; Greene's purpose was to enter at once upon a campaign. Thus new life was infused into the soldiers; they were to follow an able leader against Cornwallis, who in the future was not to find much peace.

During those days none were idle. From morning until night I was in the saddle, nor did the General spare himself; at the end of two weeks the army was prepared to march southward, where lay Cornwallis, seventy miles away.

Quick to act when all was in readiness, the commander entered at once upon his plan of campaign. Separating the army into two divisions, he sent General Morgan with a thousand men into South Carolina, with orders to harass the enemy, but to beware of battle against a superior force. The policy was to tire his lordship out, but the battle of Camden must not be repeated; another such defeat would lose the Carolinas to the Colonies.

Having sent Morgan westward, Greene made his second move, and with the army I once more found myself upon the march from Charlotte. Close upon the new year we encamped for a time to watch the movements of the enemy.

For a few days nothing of importance occurred; my duties were light, and Clark and I had opportunities of being much together; our constant desire for action was unexpectedly gratified.

I was sent for by the commander one evening, and found him seated beside a table studying carefully a map spread before him. Upon my entrance he looked up with a genial smile.

"Captain de Marc," said he shortly, "I have

within the hour received intelligence from the south, which must be acted upon quickly."

He ran his finger over the map, marking certain portions with a pin. "General Morgan," he continued, "is in the vicinity of Broad River marching westward. I have word that it is Lord Cornwallis's purpose to overtake him, and the expedition has been entrusted to Colonel Tarleton. Morgan must be warned of this move against him."

Perceiving he had confided to me his plans, I knew there was a motive, and his next words did not surprise me.

"I wish to entrust you with a message to General Morgan. A sergeant's guard of dragoons will accompany you, also Captain Clark. The start must be made without delay, for every hour is precious: it is a ride of ninety miles, but do not spare your horses."

He turned to the table and wrote rapidly for several minutes, then sealed the letter and handed it to me. "Deliver this to General Morgan," said he; "I wish you success, and much depends upon your expedition."

Comprehending the importance of the trust reposed in me, I hastened to acquaint the ranger with regard to our errand.

"It will be a bold dash," said he, "we may fall in with this same Tarleton and see some fighting. General Morgan will offer battle unless the odds are overwhelming."

In less than an hour we were in the saddle, and led by a trusty guide familiar with the region, speeding like the wind through the night. A feeling of elation took possession of me; the British must move fast to outstrip us; upon our despatch might hang the ultimate fate of the campaign.

Morgan was encamped upon the bank of a stream called Pacolet, when, after riding without rest for many hours, we overtook him. I delivered to him General Greene's letter, which he read with a serious countenance.

"Sir," said he, "your coming is most opportune; now the British will find me prepared. My present position is untenable, if Tarleton had come upon us here misfortune would have followed."

Summoning an aide, he directed that we should be given such attention as circumstances permitted, but there was not much time for repose. In less than an hour after our arrival the troops were on the move, hastening toward the upper forks of the Broad River.

It was mid-winter, but the roads, hardened at night, became soft and muddy under exposure to the sun's rays. The soldiers made slow progress, though not encumbered with cannon or baggage. Scouts brought the intelligence that Tarleton was coming like the wind. Morgan called his officers in consultation: Colonels Howard, Washington, Pickens and Majors McDowell and Cunningham. Through his courtesy, opportunity was given me to be present at the meeting, and to be introduced to each in turn.

"The enemy are close at hand," said Morgan, "and will soon overtake us; I intend to offer battle."

"Sir," replied Colonel Howard, "would it not be wiser to cross the river, where, among the hills, we could better withstand the British?"

"They are too near," answered Morgan, "and might come upon us before we could ford the stream, when, confused and thrown into disorder, we would be at a disadvantage."

"What may be their number?" asked Colonel Washington.

"General Greene has informed me," replied the commander, "that it is about our own; light infantry and Tarleton's dragoons. Our scouts have verified in part this information."

"Many of our troops are raw militia," ventured Howard.

"At Saratoga," replied Morgan, "I saw militia drive before them the British regulars. Gentlemen, to your places; we will await the enemy."

A veteran bush-fighter, and upon ground of his own choosing, his military pride urged him to make no retreat.

A few hours yet remained of daylight, and wishing to study the nature of the coming battle, at the General's invitation I accompanied him over the ground which was to be the scene of the prospective conflict, should Tarleton attack the Americans.

The army had halted in a broken country full of uneven elevations, and half covered by woods free from underbrush; a scattering of sheds were near the camp, the region having been used as a grazing place for cattle, before the foragers of both armies had driven them from the neighborhood.

Riding past these rude structures, General Morgan reined in his horse upon the summit of an elevation from which he could take a view of the surrounding country. Looking down, I saw that the woods extended almost to the base of the hill, and by reason of the scarcity of thickets it was a favorable place for the maneuvering of cavalry. Behind me a distance of some eighty yards arose a second elevation lower than that upon which I stood, but the sides steeper and covered with rocks of various sizes. From my horse's feet to the bor-

der of the woods in front, the slope was gradual, the ascent perhaps three hundred yards. Behind the second elevation the country was more open, stretching in an almost unbroken line to the Broad River, six miles away.

General Morgan turned to me. "You will perceive," said he, "the British must attack us from that direction;" pointing to the woods at the foot of the slope. "I propose to wait for their coming in two lines, the first, near the foot of the slope before us, composed of the militia. Experience has taught me that raw troops will give way at the first fire; having received the onset of the enemy, the men will waver and fall back, but behind them," he indicated the eminence where we stood, "will be stationed the regulars, upon whom we must depend for victory. To reach them the red-coats will have to mount the hill, and charge up the slope."

I glanced to the right and left, thinking it would not be difficult for the British cavalry to outflank the lines, unprotected as they were on the sides, by swamps or other natural obstacles to the free action of horsemen. The commander read my apprehension.

"My wings will be unprotected," said he, "but I know Tarleton's mode of fighting: he will charge the front, confident of dispersing the militia and carrying the hill, but if he seeks to attack the flank, he must deal with Colonel Washington's dragoons, who will watch for the movement from yonder slope," he pointed to the second elevation. Then, as though to himself: "With no friendly swamp at hand, and the deep waters of the Broad behind, the men will fight more desperately, for upon their bravery will depend their lives."

Darkness was already fast approaching; a hun-

dred camp-fires gleamed amid the forest, and the soldiers, wearied by hours of marching, retired to rest with arms ready for instant use. But Morgan and his officers gave little thought to repose. Throughout the long night he went about with them over the ground, explaining to each in detail, his position for the next day, and receiving from time to time reports brought to him by his scouts.

Nor did I take more rest than the others. We were upon the verge of a battle, in which I, for the first time, would be an active participant. As the wakeful hours one by one were told off, I did not close my eyes, although so advised by Clark, thus to be in better condition for the morrow. Each moment I expected that the bugle-call of Tarleton's legions would break the silence of the night; to my excited imagination the enemy was already advancing upon the sleeping soldiers.

The first signs of dawn were just streaking the east when a scout brought word that the British were only a few miles away, and rapidly marching toward the Cowpens. At once the whole camp awakened into life, though several hours must elapse before the enemy would be prepared to direct an attack.

Orders were issued that the men should break-fast; fortunately there was sufficient time to avoid the necessity of beginning a battle with an army of men faint with hunger.

The soldiers were engaged over their camp-fires, when a second scout appeared from the direction of the enemy with the report that Tarleton had left his baggage and was hastening forward, although his men were wearied with a night's march, and had not broken their fast, but he said they would finish the work before them, resting afterward. Morgan turned to his officers, saying :

"Gentlemen, to your places ; these red-coats are over-confident."

The sun was high in the heavens, when, invigorated by their night's rest and the morning meal, the Americans formed their lines ; the Carolinian militia and Georgia riflemen in front, Howard's regulars and the Virginian riflemen fifty paces in the rear. On the slope of the second eminence were the dragoons, under Colonel Washington, eighty strong, and three score mounted Carolinian volunteers.

Morgan walked calmly back and forth before the militiamen. "This is the way to use a bayonet," said he, taking the gun from the hands of a raw recruit. To another : "Aim at the buckle, lad ; it is less than knocking down a squirrel."

Some of the riflemen laughed, for they could bring down a squirrel from the highest tree. Many of the militiamen, whose knees had already begun to tremble, plucked up courage.

"Fire two volleys and the day is ours," said Morgan, "then fall back and give the other boys a chance." He knew the men would waver in the face of advancing bayonets.

He crossed to the second line—the regulars upon whom he depended to win the battle. From my place half-way between the lines, I saw him smile as he pointed to the motionless militiamen.

"They will fall back," said he, "then it is your turn."

He then motioned me to his side. "Captain de Marc," said he, "you are well mounted ; will you put yourself under Colonel Washington ?"

He walked by my side to the summit of the hill, and leaped upon his horse ; as I continued down the slope to join the dragoons, he said :

"You know Tarleton ; wait and you will see him presently."

Fifteen minutes passed and a sound came from behind the belt of woodland flanking the first ascent. I saw patches of scarlet among the trees and the gleam of bayonets, and heard the rumble of cannon wheels.

"They are coming," said Morgan. His coolness filled me with admiration.

The next moment a line of red-coats, their front bristling with bayonets, rushed upon the Carolinians. A three-pounder, dragged hastily into position, opened fire, and the dull boom reechoed across the hills.

The advancing British were almost at the foot of the slope, when a line of fire rolled along the American rank, and a cloud of drifting smoke hid the combatants. As it thinned I could see that many of the enemy were down, their lines broken, and a few fleeing to the rear. A shout went up from the regulars stationed on the crest of the hill, but before the echo died away, the woods were swarming with the British.

A second line of infantry led by a mounted officer in whom I recognized Tarleton swept upon the militiamen ; at the same moment two bodies of dragoons advanced upon the left and right toward the flanks of the Americans. Rifles among the Georgians cracked spitefully ; a dozen saddles were emptied, but the dragoons spurred their horses forward and attacked both in front and upon the flanks, when the militiamen gave way.

A cheer went up from the red-coated ranks. A second line appeared behind the first and charged up the hill led by Tarleton and his officers.

The ranks of the regulars opened, to let the

Carolinians through, then closed again, and the hill became a sheet of flame. The British wavered—halted suddenly and poured in a volley; they had thought to win the victory by the bayonet, but the bullets of the regulars checked their onset.

Tarleton was everywhere, encouraging by word and act the shattered line.

“For shame!” I heard him shout, “up and at these countrymen!”

The fight grew hotter. The militiamen, used to the whistling of bullets, formed again behind the regulars. Tarleton, seeing he must change his plan of attack, swung a battalion to the right; he intended to strike Howard’s line on the flank and scatter it. A dense cloud of smoke hung over the hillside, and the slope, swept by a rain of bullets, was covered with the dead and wounded.

Howard issued a command, which in the deafening noise I could not hear. The line of British bayonets swept up the hill and were almost upon his men. Suddenly the regulars wavered; my heart stood still, for they were losing ground.

In a moment Morgan was among them; I learned afterward that Howard’s men mistook his order, thinking it a command to fall back to the second elevation. The mistake was most fortunate, for the British, thinking they had the enemy upon the run, rushed forward irregularly in pursuit.

There was a medley of wild shouts, shots, and cries of agony in my ears. General Morgan, hatless and flushed, dashed past me.

“They are coming like a wild mob; turn and let them have it!” I heard him shout.

A cry of enthusiasm burst from my lips, for at the command, the regulars did turn, and the exultant red-coats were swept down by a storm of bullets.

"The bayonet! give them the bayonet!" went up from the Americans. The British, deaf to Tarleton's furious commands, fled like a herd of sheep, and close behind them thundered Colonel Washington's dragoons.

Carried away in the rush of horsemen I discharged my pistols at the red-coats nearest me, and with the rest dashed forward. The smoke had drifted away and the slope of the hill was alive with struggling dragoons, for Tarleton's cavalry sought to snatch victory from defeat. A saber flashed before my eyes, to be struck upward by an unseen hand.

"Have a care, M. de Marc!" and Clark, begrimed with sweat and smoke, hurled himself upon a second red-coat who sought to stay his course.

I was in the center of the mêlée, carried away by the impetuosity of the charge, unmindful of pistol shots and the flash of sabers. I cut desperately at one who carried the English guidon; the man went down, and, turning, I confronted Tarleton.

"Ah!" cried he, "M. le Frenchman!" and struck at me furiously.

In the interval which elapsed between his words and the sweep of the blade, I noticed the contemptuous sneer upon his lips. He truly thought I had tricked him well, and that my presence in Charlotte was that of a spy.

But he had befriended me, and there was no wish in my heart to do him harm; however, to avoid him was impossible; to remain inactive meant death or a serious wound.

Meeting his blow I turned aside the blade, and thrust fiercely; he parried and uttered an oath—the next moment we were separated by the cursing dragoons about us.

The bravery of the British, outnumbered and



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surrounded on every side, was magnificent. Driven to fury, reckless at all times in the face of danger, Tartleton fought like a madman, encouraging by example his handful of followers. The advance of Howard's regulars brought the conflict to a sudden termination. A quarter of the enemy's number was already fleeing through the woods ; a hundred lay dead upon the field, and ten score wounded. Tartleton saw the battle was irretrievably lost, and followed by a dozen of his dragoons, he galloped madly away, nor could he be overtaken.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE NIGHT AFTER THE BATTLE.

THE victory of General Morgan was complete. Tarleton, who thought to crush him, was a leader without an army, fleeing to the friendly shelter of Lord Cornwallis's guns thirty miles away. But although the Americans remained masters of the field, General Morgan well knew that a fresh danger threatened him. His lordship, lying between him and General Greene, would not remain inactive, so before midnight following the day of battle, he was on his way to ford the Broad River, and push eastward with his prisoners, two captured cannons, wagons and provisions, taken from the British.

Clark and I did not wait to witness the march of the army. Our duty was to return to General Greene, and Morgan, if pursued by Cornwallis, might lead us many miles out of our course. After defeat at the Cowpens we had little fear of the enemy's troubling us on the way, did we ride with haste to Greene's headquarters.

For the first few miles we met many countrymen hurrying toward the battle-field, who questioned us eagerly concerning the conflict. As the distance widened between us and the scene of the late encounter, people were not so well informed, and we told the news of the victory to those dwelling along the road.

As it had been somewhat late in the day when we

left the Cowpens, night overtook us before the journey was half completed, and as we rode side by side Clark suggested that we should take an hour's rest at the next farmhouse to refresh both ourselves and horses. It seemed wise, as we were overcome with fatigue and drowsiness. Even a short rest would be beneficial, so we decided to beg hospitality at the first dwelling.

The country through which we were riding was sparsely settled, and another hour elapsed before the twinkling light from a distant window gave promise of food and shelter. Even if those within resented our coming it would matter little, for, with Clark and the sergeant's guard which accompanied us, our party numbered ten.

As we approached the dwelling which stood a dozen yards back from the road, the ranger halted.

"We must be cautious," said he, "not knowing who may be inside; the lights burn brightly and I hear voices."

Slipping noiselessly from the saddle and handing the reins to a soldier he advanced toward the house. Waiting in the road we could discern his figure faintly outlined against the lighted window.

"It may be a wedding, or a christening," ventured one of my companions, "if so, there will be food and drink in plenty."

A few moments of silence followed, when suddenly the door of the house was thrown violently open, and a man darted out; then a second, and there was a flash, a report, and the first disappeared in a twinkling. A woman's scream reached us.

"Come!" said I, turning to the soldiers, "something is wrong."

An ejaculation interrupted me. "Look!" whispered one of the men, "that is a red-coat."

The light streaming through the open door fell full upon the one who had fired a shot at the fleeing man ; the scarlet coat with its yellow facings, cavalry helmet and high riding boots proclaimed the wearer a British dragoon. With pistol in hand he stood upon the threshold and peered into the darkness, seeking to learn the effect of his aim.

As I looked in astonishment at this figure silhouetted in the frame of the door, a second and third head appeared behind him, and a voice broke the silence, saying : "The fool is down !"

The sergeant beside me touched my arm. "Sir," he whispered, "we have come upon a nice nest of ruffians ; they are of Tarleton's command, and having fled the Cowpens, would murder and insult peaceful country folk."

The words were accompanied by the faint click of a carbine.

"Hold," said I, "Captain Clark has not yet returned ; we must wait for him."

The figures on the threshold vanished and the closing of the door shut off the light. A babel of voices came from within, amid which I heard the cries of a woman and scornful laughter. Just then a figure glided out of the darkness ; it was Clark who had noiselessly returned.

"Come," said he, "there is work before us ; some of those who escaped from General Morgan have seized the house, driven out and killed its owner, and are abusing women."

With a few hurried words he directed the soldiers to picket their horses and surround the dwelling. He wished those within to be taken alive, but if any attempted escape they must be prevented, even should a bullet be required. The Americans hastened to obey his order, leaving us together in the road.

"We will fasten our horses here," said the ranger, "and go in upon them boldly. These ruffians finding themselves in a trap will not offer much resistance; they deserve hanging as common murderers, but it is our duty to put the matter into the hands of General Greene. Have your pistols in readiness, but do not fire unless absolutely necessary."

He spoke with great coolness, although to me it seemed a dangerous situation, but so implicit was my confidence in his judgment, that a doubt of its expediency did not cross my mind. At Bourmont House, the cabin in the forest, King's Mountain and the Cowpens, his wisdom had been tested and never found wanting.

As we neared the house, those within seemed to grow more boisterous; the red-coats, not suspecting danger, were revenging themselves upon helpless women for their defeat at the hands of the Americans. Glancing about I saw the dark forms of our companions near at hand, awaiting the signal to close in when Clark commanded it. He was already upon the threshold, a pistol in each hand, and with a sudden kick burst open the door.

The interior was brilliantly lighted with a dozen candles, for the British had not been sparing of such things as the house afforded. The remnants of a meal were scattered upon the table and a chair or two had been added to a log which blazed in the fireplace. Six men occupied the room, two in the dress of Tarleton's dragoons and three whose uniforms marked them as grenadiers of the line. The sixth man wore the boots and breeches of a cavalryman, but having thrown off his coat, was only clad above the waist in a shirt adorned with ruffles. On hearing the opening of the door he turned his

face toward us, and the blood surged in torrents to my head, as I confronted Brooks, the renegade.

At our unexpected appearance a silence fell upon the room, save for the sobs of a woman, who, crouching in one corner, was upon her knees trying to protect a second and younger female, whose motionless form suggested death or unconsciousness. For a moment Clark stood immovable, the buff and blue of his uniform revealed in the bright light of the candles, his pistols leveled at those before him.

In that first moment Major Brooks did not seem to recognize the presence of a personal enemy. Surprise benumbed his faculties, and he could only gaze with blanched cheeks and trembling lips. But when Clark spoke, amazement gave place to a look of terror; the pupils of his eyes dilated, his knees tottered, and a sickly gray overspread his face.

If the ranger was moved by the unexpected presence of one toward whom as a man and patriot he had cause to feel the bitterest hatred, no sign betrayed surprise or gratification, and his voice when he spoke was cold and firm.

"You will surrender quietly," said he; "it is not my desire to mete out such justice as is given to murderers and renegades; that will be reserved until later. My men surround the house and you are prisoners."

Seeing but two opposed to them, the red-coats thought he was trying to obtain by cunning what was beyond his power to win by force of arms, and one, bolder than his fellows, sprang toward the muskets standing beside the fireplace; but before he reached them the ranger fired, sending the man to the floor with a broken shoulder. At the same moment the voices of the Americans outside calling

to each other to stand ready warned the enemy that their position was, indeed, hopeless. With sullen glances, those who carried weapons dropped them upon the floor, signifying their surrender.

"And you, sir," said Clark sternly, fixing his eyes upon the Major's face; "you, who are neither English or American."

With trembling fingers the wretch plucked at the drooping mustache, after his old habit. Twice his lips parted, and twice his tongue refused its office; so pitiful was his condition, that even the crestfallen red-coats showed their contempt.

"What would you?" he muttered, "I am an English officer—"

A scornful smile crossed the ranger's features. "Even Tarleton," said he coldly, "drove you from his presence. You are apart from those who wear the King's uniform, yet I will spare you; your fate will lie in the hands of General Greene."

The woman who crouched in the corner crept toward us. "Sirs," she cried, "he is the one who killed her; she resisted him and—"

Unconsciously she came near to the cowering figure standing in the center of the room, and with a bound he sprang back, holding her as a shield before him, and snatching a pistol from its hiding place, he fired across her shoulder at the tall form of the American.

A cry escaped me, for I thought Clark was slain, but the bullet missed its mark. For a moment he stood motionless, a few red drops trickling down his face from the temple which had been grazed. A murmur of anger arose from the captured red-coats, with the word—"Coward"; not one among them would have used a woman as a shield.

The suspense was of short duration. As the

soldiers without, alarmed at the second shot, rushed toward the doorway, Clark dropped his pistols, and springing forward tore the renegade from his fancied security. Brooks retreated to the wall, for the look in the other's eyes told him that the hour of mercy was passed. Twice he struck fiercely at the advancing and unarmed American with the heavy stock of his pistol; before he could repeat the blows the rough hands of the woodsman seized him about the body. Driven to desperation he struggled bravely, crying to his late companions to save him.

With all the strength of his iron muscles Clark pressed him against the wall. An ashy paleness crept over his face, his hands sought to stay the vicelike grasp which crushed his ribs, and a cry of agony gurgled from his lips. All in the room were horrified into silence, and nothing was heard save the struggles of the wretched man, and the creaking of the timbers strained by the pressure of his body.

Suddenly the blue lips turned crimson, a gush of blood stained the white ruffles at his throat, and his head fell, resting upon Clark's shoulder. The ranger loosed his hold and stepped back, letting the limp body sink to the floor where it lay quivering. His face was flushed to a dull red, the heaving of his breast had the movement of a blacksmith's bellows, but he was unharmed. I sprang to his side. "Good God!" I cried, and could speak no more; emotion overcame me.

"Attend to him," said Clark slowly, for the heat of passion had died away, "and to the women; we cannot stay longer."

I bent over the motionless form of the renegade and felt for the heart beat, but his breast was al-

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ready growing cold. My promise to Mistress Bourmont that I would not seek him out was needless ; the man was dead.

The woman whom he had so foully struck, almost the last act in a career of crime and treachery, had only fainted ; he went not into the presence of his Maker with her blood upon his soul. Necessity forbade longer delay. The body of Major Brooks was buried, I know not where, and the soldiers thought little of the matter.

Once more upon our way, Clark rode silently at my side—and never afterward did a word concerning that fateful hour in the cabin pass his lips.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE INN AT SALISBURY.

GENERAL GREENE was encamped upon Cheraw Hill; the sun shone high in the heavens when we reached him with news of Morgan's victory. After questioning us closely he ordered that one of the prisoners should be brought, hoping to learn from him something concerning Cornwallis's army. I had expected the commander would be highly excited over the good fortune to his arms, but his face remained grave, while the cheers of the soldiers, roused to enthusiasm by the news of the victory, rang throughout the camp.

"General Morgan is marching northeast toward Salisbury," he said; "the enemy may intercept him before he reaches the Catawba, and there is much to be done."

The succeeding days were filled with activity; the soldiers, inspirited by the defeat of Tarleton, regained their courage, and the misfortune at Camden was in part forgotten. General Greene confided to no one his plans. He seldom called the officers to councils, but evidently his mind was not idle. Half a score of couriers had ridden out of camp, and I heard one would cross North Carolina to the river Dan, close to the border of Virginia. An officer with whom I dined that evening knew his errand.

"He is to collect all the boats upon the river," said he; then with a laugh: "No one understands

the General's purpose ; the Dan is two hundred miles away."

"Shelby, Campbell and Marion are ordered to join us," added another ; "the army will not long remain inactive."

The meal was scarcely finished when an orderly appeared summoning me to headquarters. General Greene, booted and clad for a journey, greeted me with :

"Captain de Marc, I start at once to overtake General Morgan. You will accompany me."

Surprised at his sudden action I hastened to my quarters to make ready. He was in the saddle when I rejoined him, and a few paces away those who were to accompany us sat motionless on their horses : a countryman who knew the roads, and a handful of dragoons.

It is not my purpose to follow closely the events which crowded fast upon us during the succeeding days, when, riding beside the grave-faced Rhode Islander, I traversed many miles of a country rendered desolate by the ravages of war and inclement weather. During this time I learned to comprehend the patience and careful thoughtfulness of the man whom Washington had chosen as his successor, should he become disabled. The roads, frozen at night, and knee-deep with mud at midday, hours of sleeplessness and utter weariness, must have overcome him as they did me, but his endurance, coolness and dignity always remained the same.

We reached Morgan's camp after nightfall, in the midst of a driving rain-storm, wet, covered with mud and faint with fatigue, but short respite was permitted us. The army lay on the bank of the Catawba, and the stream alone separated it from

the red-coated legions, which, like a pack of blood-hounds, had followed in swift pursuit. Looking across the rising waters I saw the glimmer of the hostile camp-fires dotting the opposite shore; the same rain which wet us had been the salvation of the army, for the river, swelled by torrents which fell from the clouds, had become a wild and turbulent stream, unfordable for man and beast.

General Morgan greeted the commander warmly, but with mingled incredulity and astonishment, for he thought him miles away at Cheraw Hill.

"What is your line of march?" asked General Greene, "the river can hardly hold the enemy twenty-four hours."

"To the northeast," replied Morgan, "my men are worn out, for the race has been a hard one."

Greene consulted a map spread upon a camp chest. "It is not safe," said he, "Cornwallis will overtake you;" and following with his finger he pointed out another route for Morgan and his men. It was for this he had ridden four days through rain and mud.

During the rest of the night the army moved away over the road the commander had selected, but he tarried in the neighborhood in order to collect a body of militia, who were assembling from the surrounding districts.

We had ridden well toward Salisbury, when the sound of galloping hoofs attracted our attention. A courier appeared, urging his horse with whip and spur.

"Cornwallis is across the river!" he shouted. "Tarleton is butchering peaceful farmers; his dragoons are only a few miles behind."

For an instant a shadow of hopelessness flashed across the commander's face, to be succeeded by a

look of determination. "We will go to Salisbury," said he simply, and we turned our horses' heads in the direction of the town, reaching it about midday.

A physician, who had remained behind to care for the wounded, greeted him as he dismounted wearily before the tavern door.

"Not with the army, General?" he asked in surprise; "thank God, you are unharmed."

"Yes, but fatigued, penniless and hungry," replied Greene sorrowfully, "I am here but for a moment."

A woman who was standing in the door went quickly into the house. The commander followed, requesting that some food be hastily set before us.

The room, with its low ceiling and scant furniture, matched our condition. Over the mantel I noticed a picture of King George, who with painted eyes looked coldly upon the mud-covered figure of the American officer. General Greene followed my gaze and smiled gravely, but before he had time to speak, the door opened, and the woman whom I had seen outside entered, setting upon the table such eatables as she had at command. The commander greeted her courteously, and said: "It is sufficient!"

She smiled sadly, and replied: "It was not for this, General, I came, but to bring you these; you need them more than I;" and she held toward him two bags containing silver pieces.

A moment of silence followed. Greene's voice trembled as he replied: "I thank you, madame, in the name of the Colonies."

As he turned to put the money into my hands his eyes fell upon the picture of King George. Crossing to the mantel he reversed the canvas, and traced with his pencil a few words, plainly legible from

where I stood—full of admiration for the noble woman who had sacrificed her savings to help the cause of liberty. I do not know whether the picture has been preserved ; it would be a rich heritage to her children. Upon its back General Greene had written :

“ Hide thy face, King George, and blush.”

Greater thanks he could not have given to that woman of the Colonies. It was but one incident among many which came under my observation during the months I passed with the soldiers of the Continental army.

It is not for me to dwell upon the things which have now become history, and are familiar, or should be, to every schoolboy throughout the new-born republic to which I gave such small aid as one man may to a mighty cause. It was my privilege to serve under General Greene during those eventful winter months, when the fate of the south hung by a slender thread, with only his guiding spirit and patient zeal to thwart the ambition of the King's officers whom success had rendered foolhardy.

Beginning with the moment when I rode by his side from the tavern at Salisbury, to the hour, fifteen days later, when the hostile armies lay panting within sight of each other upon opposite banks of the river Dan, every one who took part in that famous game of fox and hounds suffered incredible hardships. For two hundred miles the two armies struggled through a country thinly peopled, covered by swamps and forests, cut by streams swelled to angry torrents ; without tents, and often without provisions. And if the British suffered, as in that march from Charlotte to Winnsborough, much more did the soldiers of the Colonies ; for many with no clothing except rags, shoeless, and wasted

by sickness, left a track of blood behind them, upon which the red-coats followed like a pack of hungry wolves.

As we lay encamped upon the bank of the Dan, knowing that Cornwallis was at last out-generalled by the man he had chosen to term "a Yankee blacksmith," I thought of the words addressed to me in General Washington's headquarters a few months before. That, did occasion arise, the patriots, too, would know how to suffer patiently for the cause of liberty.

Though General Greene had escaped being taken, and forced to do battle with a superior and better equipped force than his own, the subsiding of the river might cause Cornwallis to venture into Virginia, therefore preparations were made to continue the retreat northward. The action of the British commander altered the plan. Upon the eighteenth of February he broke up his camp, and began a retrograde march along the road by which he had pursued the Americans to the northern border of the Carolinas. Quick to act, Greene decided on a bold venture. No sooner were the British well upon their way, than Colonel Lee with his light dragoons and three companies of well-equipped militia, recrossed the river hot upon the rear of the vanishing red-coats.

It was the pleasure of the commander that Captain Clark and I should accompany the dashing "Light Horse Harry," for as such Colonel Lee had come to be known throughout the army.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE SWAMP FOX.

THE bold enterprise of Colonel Lee and his followers took us many miles from the main army, for, being directed by General Greene to harass the enemy, the intrepid dragoons hovered upon their flanks, cut off supplies, fell upon detachments, and liberated prisoners.

Our course led us to the south and east, often amid swamps, among the hills, and through forests or across the open country. Well mounted, provided by the country folk with food and shelter, this was indeed a pastime compared with the weary flight which had preceded the dash into the jaws of the lion.

Finally, Cornwallis made desperate by the unceasing energy of the American horsemen, turned and retraced his steps toward the northern part of the Carolinas. There Greene awaited him, but in the battle which followed, evil fortune and no wish of my own prevented me from being a participant.

We had followed the British well toward the south, when, during a raid in the darkness upon an outpost, I was separated from my companions ; a company of dragoons, riding out to repel us, cut me off from following the American horsemen. I knew nothing of the country, and fearing to fall into the hands of the enemy, more especially Tarleton, who

looked upon me as a spy, I wandered about through the night with no reckoning as to my position. Morning found me miles to the east and with little hope of rejoining the army, which changed ground constantly, and perhaps now between us were the legions of Cornwallis.

Stopping at a farmhouse, I made known my plight to the inmates, who listened incredulously, and no one could be induced to guide me in any direction. This I found arose through fear of Tarleton, who a few days before had mercilessly killed several unresisting countrymen, being rendered more blood-thirsty by his reverse at Cowpens.

When I told them I was aide to General Greene, they manifested more courtesy in the way of food and offer of shelter, but my host intimated, were any of the British to come about, his kindness to an American officer would be rewarded by the destruction of property, if not injury to his person. He was in truth one of the half-hearted patriots, who, if red-coats appeared, wished to be considered neutral, or was ready to cry—"God save the King!"

Finding there was nothing to be gained by remaining longer, I said: "Perhaps there are Americans about here to whom I can apply with more success than to you."

"As to that," replied he, "it is probable; yesterday certain of Marion's dragoons watered their horses at yonder well."

"Do you know in which direction they went?" asked I, hope reviving at the welcome news.

He pointed to the east. "You may find them there," he replied, "but they are always on the move."

Only one course was open to me; to ride eastward, when, fortune favoring, there was a possibility

of falling in with Marion, who had been summoned to unite with Greene, and was now doubtless *en route* toward the army. With a somewhat lighter heart I resumed my way upon the highroad, making inquiries of those I met as to any knowledge of General Marion.

Some hours had passed, when there fell upon my ears the clatter of approaching horsemen, and before I could draw rein three troopers clad in the King's livery rode down upon me.

Astounded at so unexpected an encounter, I resolved to sell my life dearly; for death by a pistol ball was preferable to being taken a prisoner before Cornwallis. The horsemen were already close upon me when I leaped from the saddle, and sheltered myself behind a friendly bush to await their challenge, with pistols in hand. Seeing my defensive attitude, they checked their horses, looking at me with some curiosity.

"Faith!" cried one, who wore the coat of a British officer, "whom have we here threatening us so boldly?"

"'Tis Cornwallis's advance," replied another, "although a poor dragoon, seeing he does not trust to the saber. Come, sir, who are you?"

His words, spoken in a bantering tone, were scarcely fitted to the lips of an Englishman, and he spoke lightly of Cornwallis.

"I wish but to defend myself," replied I, a wild hope rising in my breast; "having once been a prisoner in the power of Tarleton, I——"

"Of whom?" cried one of the riders. "Did you say Tarleton?"

He grasped the humor of the situation and laughed, saying: "If you had met those with whom we exchanged our rags for this scarlet finery, you would

perhaps have returned to Tarleton's keeping. Our dress to be sure is British, but we follow *Marion*, sir."

Gladly as I accepted the assurance they were Americans I hesitated, fearing a trick lay behind the words and, when too late, there would be ample opportunity to bewail my credulity. Therefore, I resolved to be upon my guard.

"You speak of Marion," said I, "and claim to be of his dragoons. Your colors belie the words."

The smile broadened upon the horseman's lips.

"'Tis not the coat which makes the man," quoth he, "else would those who follow Marion be of small concern to Cornwallis and his hirelings."

Then, as I still hesitated, holding the pistols ready, his brow darkened.

"Sir!" cried he, "enough of idle words. American or British, we have you at a disadvantage, nor do we know *your* colors, sir."

I could but recognize the justice of his suspicions, for, if as he asserted, he and his companion had exchanged coats with the enemy, might not I, a British officer, have donned the buff and blue?

How the interview would have terminated I know not, but, at that moment, a fourth horseman appeared, hastening toward us. When he drew nearer my heart bounded; in the gaunt figure of the approaching rider I recognized McDowell, of the Carolinas.

Our meeting set all doubts at rest and filled me with keenest satisfaction, the more so that I learned General Marion was encamped a few miles to the east with a score of followers, also

that it was his purpose to join General Greene's army at the first opportunity.

I no longer feared falling into the hands of the British, and with a light heart accompanied McDowell and the three dragoons to the American camp. A smile crossed the Carolinian's face when he learned the manner in which I had fallen in with his companions. He said it was not an uncommon thing for Marion's followers to exchange with the prisoners who fell into their hands, for they were usually in sad need of clothing, but it was a custom which frequently led to misunderstanding as I had experienced.

The General greeted me warmly and with much surprise, for since leaving Chester he had heard nothing concerning me, and supposed, when the British marched southward from Charlotte, that I had returned to the north. He listened attentively to the account of my experiences after our parting, and expressed satisfaction that I had joined myself to the cause of liberty, and accompanied General Greene to the Carolinas. Of Captain Bourmont's death he spoke with much feeling, saying, had he suspected so sad an ending to his sister's sojourn in Camden, he would have provided the maid with a protector, but had understood from McDowell that her brother was recovering rapidly.

I noticed with much wonder and curiosity the varied elements which this man had gathered about him, he, who beyond all other American commanders in the south, had embarrassed Lord Cornwallis the most successfully before the coming of General Greene.

The camp was situated in the border of a wood, but they had no tents, ovens, or such parapher-

nalia as was common to the encamping of troops ; even Marion himself was accustomed to sleep upon the ground with only the heavens for a covering. All about me were ragged, sun-burned men stretched upon the withered moss, or seated on logs with their black firelocks and powder horns lying at their side. A few were clad in the buff and blue of the Continentals, some in plain homespun, and others, like those I met upon the road, in uniforms once worn by soldiers of Cornwallis. Had they ridden upon the public highway in France, ridicule and jeers would have followed them, so tattered and motley was their appearance. But by the British, who knew their intrepidity in war, their fearlessness of danger, they were dreaded ; even Tarleton, most undaunted of dragoons, acknowledged their dash and bravery.

Marion understood my thought and smiled. " You are surprised, I know," said he, " but they are patriots, M. de Marc, who have maintained the cause of liberty in the Carolinas."

I was much impressed by his words, and could but think how little England, or in fact any power in Europe, comprehended or appreciated the temper of the Colonies.

For ten days I shared the lot of this band of patriots ; scouring the country at all hours, sleeping in the swamps and woods, and always drawing nearer to the armies of Greene and Cornwallis. Twice we met detachments of the enemy, scattered them at the point of the sabre, and passed on to harass his lordship. Once we came upon a band of Tories hastening to join the red-coats ; it was an opportunity not to be lost for clothing a score of our men. At

the same time the king lost as many partisans. The royalists, awed by the sudden dashes of the "Swamp Fox" and his followers, hid their arms and waited. The battle of Guilford Court-House was spoken of as a British victory, but the Americans were everywhere; to venture through the country was to become their prisoner.

Those days were among the most memorable of my service in the Colonies. I often thought of Edouard; with his enthusiastic spirit how he would have delighted in the riding with Marion's men.

An incident, of which it was my fortune to be a witness, impressed itself deeply upon my memory.

There were with us half a score of English prisoners and, one day, word was brought to General Marion that a British officer, under the white flag, would treat for an exchange. He found Marion seated upon a log whittling industriously, for it was the General's habit to be never idle.

I saw the officer's eyes glance around our unpretentious camp in unconcealed astonishment, but with no other manifestation of surprise he returned the General's greeting and produced a letter which touched upon his errand.

Marion perused it carefully and, finding the terms to his satisfaction, so expressed himself. When, their business being finished, the officer would have departed, Marion, arose courteously.

"Sir," said he, "it is close upon our dinner hour; I beg the honor of your company."

The Englishman cast his eyes around the camp as though seeking to discern preparations for the suggested meal. The shadow of a smile touched Marion's lips.

Turning to his body servant, who was busy with the fire, he said: "Is our dinner ready, sir?"

The negro poked among the ashes, brought to view a well-blackened sweet potato (one of the last of a carefully guarded store), wiped it upon his cotton shirt-sleeve and pricked it with a sharpened stick.

I saw the Englishman's eyes widen with surprise which increased to astonishment when, having found the potatoes to his liking, the negro piled the largest upon a piece of bark and placed the unsavory looking feast on a log at Marion's side.

"I fear, sir," said the latter, "our dinner will not prove so palatable to you as I could wish; but it is the best we have."

Presently the officer broke out into a laugh. "Pardon, General," said he, "but I cannot but think how drolly some of my brother officers would take such fare as this."

"Variety is, indeed, lacking," replied Marion, "but, had you come to-morrow, I might have been necessitated the mortification of permitting a soldier and a gentleman to depart without profered hospitality."

The officer helped himself to a potato with what *sang froid* he could command. "I presume it is a sort of *ban yan*, a lenten meal—"

"Not so," replied Marion soberly. "It is rather above the ordinary."

"But you are doubtless compensated," ventured the Englishman, "and, though stinted in provisions the pay is the more gratifying."

"*Not a cent*," replied Marion quickly. "We, who fight for liberty, draw no pay."

The officer made a gesture of incredulity.

"We, of the Colonies," continued Marion, "fight for our country's freedom and the benefits to be derived therefrom. We are unused to luxury, sir, but we can fight—and die if need be for the cause of liberty."

I glanced at the British officer and saw his face was the soberer of the two.

"Sir," said he, "I comprehend much that heretofore has puzzled me; Saratoga, King's Mountain and the Cow Pens."

He partook of the sweet potatoes sparingly, and soon signified his desire to return to the English lines. I escorted him past our outposts. He walked as one deep in thought, and I saw that Marion's words had moved him deeply. What came of it I never knew.

It was late in March when I rejoined the army. General Greene's reception showed he felt pleasure in greeting me again. Thinking me dead, or a prisoner, he had, in a letter to Lafayette, spoken of his fears. Clark welcomed me as though I was his son.

"We are only at the beginning of the campaign," said he, "Spring is upon us, the roads permit of rapid marches, and the army is prepared for action. You have returned most opportunely, M. de Marc."

CHAPTER XXVII.

AFTER YORKTOWN.

AND so the days came, were lived through, and passed away. General Greene was constantly afield following close upon the track of the British, but not offering battle if the superior number of Cornwallis's forces precluded a reasonable chance of victory. Early in April, when the meadows and forests were bright with green foliage and blossoming flowers, his lordship left the Carolinas, and hastened north, leaving Lord Rawdon with troops at Camden. After this I was no longer with the army following the red-coats under Cornwallis and Tarleton. General Greene turned to South Carolina, intent upon offering battle to the enemy at Camden, and there I finished my service in the Continental war.

News came of activity in the north ; a long letter from the Vicomte answering one of mine, in which I apprised him of my safety, found its way to our camp. My young countryman wrote enthusiastically of going with Lafayette into Virginia, sent there by his Excellency. Later, I heard that the Marquis was near Richmond, that there had been numerous skirmishes between his soldiers and those of Cornwallis, and that General Wayne and others were marching southward with reinforcements.

I longed to hasten to the banks of the James, where were Edouard and Lafayette, but duty bound

me to General Greene. The campaign was waged with vigor against Lord Rawdon, and Cornwallis, out-generaled, saw with consternation, that to return to the Carolinas he must force his way through two hostile armies.

The days sped quickly and reports from the north poured in upon us. General Washington, resolving to arouse the army from its long inactivity, had turned his thoughts southward. But I was not to participate in the closing scenes of the campaign so rapidly nearing its culmination.

For some weeks during July and August, General Greene encamped in South Carolina watching the force under Colonel Stuart of Lord Rawdon's army. The battle of Eutaw Springs followed, in which, with Clark, I was actively engaged. By permission of the commander, I attached myself to Colonel Lee's dragoons, and was swept into the very center of the conflict. Borne away by the excitement of battle, I too recklessly exposed myself, and dimly knew what followed. A British musket-ball pierced my thigh; I heard the voice of Clark at my side, and saw the flash of fire about; then all grew black, and thenceforth, fighting for me was a thing of the past.

Upon regaining consciousness I found myself beneath a tree, surrounded by several officers. Clark had received me in his arms and carried me away from the field to a place of safety. I strove to rise, but the pain of the wound and the admonition of the surgeon overcame my purpose; I was to be but a spectator in the stirring scenes which prefaced the ending of hostilities.

For many days I lay a prisoner to pain and fever, in a house which the thoughtfulness of General Greene had secured for the accommodation of

officers whose wounds precluded their accompanying the army. Youth and vigor aided the efforts of the surgeons in my behalf, and by October I hoped to be about again.

During those hours of inactivity I watched eagerly for news from Virginia. The movements of General Washington and the French troops who had already passed Philadelphia on their march southward, filled me with impatience at the enforced idleness. One day Clark came in to see me, and said :

“The allies are at Yorktown, and Cornwallis’s condition is hopeless ; the army is filled with enthusiasm. Before many days the red-coats must lay down their arms.”

Following this I learned of the coming of the Continental army and my countrymen into Virginia. On the ninth of October, General Washington put the match to the first gun, which opened upon the British hemmed in behind their intrenchments. Would that I could have hurried northward ; Lafayette was there, and Edouard, but my wound permitted little action, much less a journey in the saddle.

Ten days later I heard cheering outside my window ; the din of fire-arms, the roll of drums and the shrill blasts of a dozen bugles. Cornwallis was taken ! the American and French arms were triumphant before Yorktown !

The same evening Clark brought me two letters : one signed “Lafayette,” the other from Mistress Bourmont. She wrote :

“I have just heard through the kindness of Mr. Clark that you are wounded ; God grant this may find you well again. Could you come to us, there

are three whose happiness it would be to minister to your comfort ; we might in part repay your many kindnesses to us. Were I not assured that no danger is apprehended from the hurt, that only you must suffer weeks of inactivity, I should desire to again ride southward, whither General Washington and the troops across the river have already gone. I can only await your coming with much anxiety ; at Bourmont House you will be always and more than welcome. . . .”

Her words filled me with happiness, and my impatience was intensified. Yorktown was taken, but —Bourmont House remained.

The next week Edouard came to me fresh from his experience at Yorktown, and from him I learned the details of that famous siege, and of how Cornwallis's troops, driven from the Carolinas by General Greene, laid down their arms on that bright October day.

He also told me that the Marquis Lafayette, knowing the war to be practically over, was planning a return to France.

“Edouard,” said I, “your ambition is now satisfied, and there is no reason why you should remain longer in America ; will you not accompany the Marquis ?”

A grave look filled his eyes. “I cannot,” he answered, “you are wounded ; I will wait.”

His words touched me : the hours would pass quicker with him at my side, but he owed a duty to the Count, his father.

“You *must* go !” I said ; “it may be many weeks before I recover, and, even then—perhaps—”

He looked at me searchingly with his clear blue

eyes. "Ah, Henri!" he cried, "I know why France is less dear to you now than in the old days. Mon Dieu! did you think I was blind? I will go with you to Bourmont House."

Words were of no avail, and he took his own way perhaps the Count blamed me—it matters little now.

October was drifting to its close. My wound was healing, but as yet the surgeon forbade the hardships incident to a protracted journey on horseback; by the middle of November probably I might venture.

On a day when Washington was preparing to return north from Yorktown, General Greene visited me with a paper which he said gave him great satisfaction.

"I have this day received it from his Excellency with a note concerning you. It is your commission as a major in the Continental army, M. de Marc, and I am most happy to deliver it into your hands. He has made known to Congress your services. Also he writes he will be pleased to see you when again on the bank of the Hudson."

Duty then called the General elsewhere, and, having learned from the surgeon that my condition would soon warrant a journey, he bade me a warm farewell. Had I but known it was the last—Death claimed him before we could meet again; the echoes of the war had scarcely ceased, when his country mourned him—as true and loyal a gentleman as ever wore the buff and blue.

A bright November morning, more than a year from the day when I first set foot in Bourmont House, I again crossed its threshold. Riding at easy stages, with the Vicomte and Captain Clark,

the journey was without incident. The wound had sorely tried my constitution, but aside from a halting step, reminder of the British musket-ball, which will be ever present, I was myself once more.

Our coming was unannounced, but before we turned from the highway into the broad lane leading to the entrance of the house, Constance saw us. She met me ere I reached the door where Madame Bourmont and Josephine awaited us. Had the son slain at Camden returned, his welcome could have been no warmer.

In that first meeting I sought to read in the maid's eyes an answer to my question, but it was impossible. Not until many hours later, when my tale was told, Edouard and Clark gone with Lieutenant Bourmont to the stables, the matron and her younger daughter withdrawn to some other part of the house, were we left alone.

The room was in semi-darkness save for the light which shone from the blazing logs in the great fireplace. For a little time there was silence—the maid watching mutely the leaping flames, I seeking for words. An ember fell upon the hearth and I arose to return it to the glowing coals. My lameness, which during the day had troubled me greatly, caused my steps to falter as I crossed the room, and drew an exclamation of sympathy from my companion.

Raising my eyes I saw the maid's were moist with unshed tears, and divined the cause. I shrank from pity, and for a moment bent over the fallen ember, seeking to hide the pain which my sudden movement had caused, but her quick eye noticed it.

"M. de Marc," said she gently, "I did not know it was so serious; you should have told me."

I forced a smile to my lips as I replied quickly: "The pain is passing, the wound is scarcely healed, and—in my happiness I had forgotten it."

The words brought a flush to her cheeks, and her eyes again sought the fire. Crossing to her side I took her hand and said:

"Constance, I have returned, and you will not say no?" Then, as she made no reply continued: "My usefulness in America is over, Yorktown ended the war. A year ago I thought when this hour arrived I should return to France, but now—"

Her eyes met mine and the look within them made me bold.

"Lafayette has gone; the Vicomte will soon follow, but I would stay—if you will answer me."

Her voice was very low as she replied: "My answer will ever be the same—as my prayers have been. You should have known, I could not tell you then; you would have misunderstood."

"It is yes!" I said, and stooping, kissed her.

"It has always been yes," she replied softly, "but—I was not sure. I would not bind you—"

"You doubted? Could you not see, my darling?"

"I did not know," she whispered softly, "time brings many changes, but now—"

"Now?" I asked tenderly.

"I am content!"

EPILOGUE.

I MIGHT lay aside the pen, for with my return to Bourmont House after the siege of Yorktown, the part I took in the war of the Colonies against the British crown, ended ; but since then a few incidents have arisen which touch upon my story.

Constance and I were married at the manor house close upon the return of spring. It was a quiet wedding, the maid would have it so, nor was I loath, being still disabled by my wound. General Washington was there and at the wedding breakfast did us the honor to toast the bride. During the hour he threw off much of the care which, for seven years, had rested upon his brow. Never have I seen a more courtly gentleman as, arising with glass in hand, he wished us all happiness upon life's journey. Afterward I met him many times, and it is an honor above all price that I may say he was my friend.

The day preceding the wedding Captain Clark handed me a package and letter from the south, sent to Bourmont House by General Marion. In the latter he regretted his inability to drink a toast at Madame Bourmont's table, but wished us "God speed" upon our way. He also spoke of certain events in the south which were of interest to me.

The package contained my father's sword ; it was found in Yorktown by a Carolinian dragoon, and, being brought to the notice of the General,

he recognized it as mine by the inscription upon the blade.

"It was drawn for America," he wrote, "but now our swords will be turned to plow-shares; perchance Madame de Marc will cherish and have a better care over it than did Tarleton."

Not until the ending of another year did I return to Paris, taking Constance with me. It was my purpose to make my home near Bourmont House, or, if peace was permanent, in New York, and I wished my wife to visit my native land.

Edouard had preceded me by many months, and his was the first greeting when we stepped upon the soil of France. Since my departure from Versailles on that eventful September day, the Count le Mans had never given evidence that I lived in his memory. I found him a crabbed old man, outwardly cold in his reception, but inwardly filled with curiosity to see the wife whom I had chosen in the Colonies. Before passing an hour in her company, he called me aside, rapping sharply upon the polished floor with his walking stick.

"I had thought you a fool, M. de Marc," said he grimly, touching me lightly upon the breast with the tip of his forefinger; "however, you have more sense than I placed to your credit. The child is charming, but yet—it is accounted for; she is French, a lily of Normandy reared in your cursed Colonies."

The old nobleman could never forgive the Cause which took Edouard across the sea.

"I thank you, Monsieur," said I, "the Marquis Lafayette once told me—"

He snapped his fingers disdainfully, and cried:

"Fi! c'est bien assez—that boy who has come between me and my son. C'est un homme dangereux."

"M. le Comte," I interrupted, "Edouard has returned in safety to you, gained some renown and much experience in America. Had you witnessed his bravery—"

His face softened, "Mon Dieu!" he cried, "you are both leagued against me; 'tis ever 'Henri,' and now—come! The Madame, your wife, has a most charming presence, sir; have you taken note of it?"

He thumped across the room, a nobleman who had outlived his time, a firm adherent of kings and empire. Had he been here a decade later, his head must have fallen among the first during the Reign of Terror.

In Paris I met Lafayette, who greeted us warmly, declaring that of all my countrymen who had taken part in the struggle for independence of the Colonies, I was the most fortunate.

In the early fall we returned to America by way of London. One day, strolling among the public buildings, I came face to face with Colonel Tarleton.

"Indeed, sir!" cried he, extending his hand cordially, "there is yet a matter between us, and need of explanation. I am your debtor for a certain sword which—adverse fortune lost to me."

I hastened to assure him it had been returned, and spoke of General Marion's letter.

"Ah! the *Fox*," cried he, "'twas a merry chase we gave each other, but—'twas much diversion and I bear no rancor." Then, laying his hand upon my shoulder:—"I would know one thing;

your true mission to Charlotte. It was the thought I had been taken in which cut the deepest."

"That," replied I, "is already known to you: it was to find the vicomte. And, one thing also has puzzled me—your friendliness to a stranger."

He shrugged his shoulders. "I was in the mood; at another time—but of that, no matter. Afterward, when I thought you were a spy and had hoodwinked me to a nicety I would have—"

"Our last meeting showed me that," I replied smiling, "you—"

He made a grimace. "When the countrymen whipped me," quoth he, "but let us speak of other things; it was that which broke Cornwallis."

We passed a pleasant hour in company, during which I related some simple facts which had puzzled him. We parted in friendly fashion, but not until he had promised to pay his respects to Constance, which he did that self-same evening. To this day I hold him to be a courteous gentleman and a man of goodly parts, though there are many in America who would have it otherwise.

* * * * *

Twelve years have passed since my first coming to the Colonies. There is peace, where once sounded the roll of drum and the echoing shots of hostile armies. The swamps and mountains of the south abide in their solitude, for Marion's men and Tarleton's legion ride no more.

Many of those by whose side I fought for liberty are gone, others have passed from sight, but I hear of them from time to time.

In these peaceful hours thoughts turn to my poor France, torn by discord, and the heated passions of those who should stand shoulder to shoulder for her safety. Lafayette is there, and Edouard, and for them I tremble; may God spare them to better days. Would that another Washington might arise to guide my distracted fatherland to peace and honor.

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